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YANKEE EPH;

OR,

THE THWARTED PLOT.

AN EPISODE OF THE PARTISANS

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BY J. R. WORCESTER.

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YANKEE EPH.

CHAPTER I.

"DEW TELL."

ABOUT five or six miles from the town of W——, in the State of South Carolina, there stood, in the year 1780, a fine mansion, belonging to a gentleman of the name of D'Arcourt, who had emigrated to the colonies many years previously.

Mr. D'Arcourt was the youngest of three brothers. The eldest—heir to the estate of their father—disappeared suddenly. For several weeks speculation was rife upon the subject, and many conjectures were advanced to account for his disappearance. The most probable of these was, that he had perished in an attempt to rescue his child—a boy of less than two years of age—from the water. This surmise was founded upon the fact that both father and child had been seen by one of the tenants, upon the bank of a deep and rapid stream, and the hat worn by the former was found lodged in the rushes. When, some time later, the body of a man—the features in too advanced a state of decomposition to be identified, but answering otherwise to the description of the missing one—was taken out of the water, conjecture became certainty, and it was interred with the pomp due the remains of an opulent and well-beloved man, and all surmise as to the cause of his death was buried with it. The body of the child was never found.

The second brother succeeded to the estates, but did not long enjoy their possession, dying within a year from the date of the burial of the eldest. Shortly before his death, he sent for his younger brother, and the two held a long conference together, the nature of which none but themselves ever knew.

Much to the surprise of all his acquaintances, immediately

on the death of his second brother, Charles D'Arcourt converted all his possessions into money, and embarked for the American colonies, where he purchased a magnificent estate in the Carolinas, and settled down to the quiet life of a planter. Here he was soon called upon to mourn the death of his wife, who died in giving birth to their first child. The husband was, for a period, inconsolable; but, time mitigating his grief, he awoke to a sense of the new duties imposed upon him, and upon the motherless baby-girl committed to his care he lavished the full force of a father's affection. Seventeen years after the death of his wife, Charles D'Arcourt felt himself amply repaid for all his anxiety, when he gazed upon the embodiment of female loveliness and excellence that called him father.

In the struggle between the colonies and the mother country, Mr. D'Arcourt openly took no part, but endeavored so to graduate his conduct as to give offense to neither party.

One morning Helen D'Arcourt, attended by an old negro—who ever regarded “young missie” as his especial care—started on her customary walk in the forest that nearly surrounded her father's plantation. She had gone about a mile from the house, when a wild scream from Cato alarmed her, and she turned quickly toward him. The negro stood, the personification of horror, apparently incapable of either speech or motion, one hand pointing to the foliage above her. Involuntarily, she glanced upward, and the sight that met her eyes chilled the blood in her veins. On a branch almost directly over her, crouched one of those fearful animals known as the American panther. His fierce, glittering eyes fixed upon her, his tail waving from side to side, the animal was prepared for the fatal spring; when, loud and clear, the crack of a rifle reverberated throughout the forest, and she beheld the terrible creature loosen his hold upon the branch and drop, quivering in his death agonies, at her feet. Of nothing more was the girl conscious, for, overcome by the terrible emotions that convulsed her—unaware even that her preserver was already at her side—she would have sunk upon the ground, had he not caught her in his arms, and dragged her beyond the reach of the dying struggles of the panther.

For a moment the stranger gazed into the beautiful face

of the unconscious being he supported, and then shouted loudly,

"Ephraim ! Ephraim !"

He was answered and soon joined by a man of tall and ungainly figure, who gazed upon the scene with staring eyes and open mouth, until he at length found voice to ejaculate,

"Dew tell ! Neow, capting—"

"Bring some water, quick !" interrupted the other, hastily, and as soon as the order was obeyed, he gently sprinkled the face of the insensible girl. He was soon successful in his efforts to restore animation.

At first Helen was so bewildered as scarcely to comprehend her situation ; but the kind, soothing voice and courteous demeanor of her preserver, and the sight of the object of her late terror stretched dead before her, tended to reassure her, and she soon recovered sufficient composure to realize her great deliverance, and to express her deep gratitude to the young man.

Mr. St. Leon—by that name the stranger introduced himself—offered to escort Helen to her father's house, and she gladly availed herself of protection she had already found so efficient. Cato followed, barely recovered from the effects of his fright, but delighted in the knowledge of the safety of his beloved mistress. Ephraim, in obedience to some orders given him by his companion, took a different direction from the rest of the party.

When, on reaching the house, Helen had introduced the young man to her father, and recounted the imminent peril from which he had rescued her, Mr. D'Arcourt could scarce find words to express his joy and heartfelt gratitude for the service rendered.

By his polished manners and intelligent conversation, St. Leon further won upon both father and daughter, and they soon felt as intimate as if they had known each other years instead of hours. They were interrupted in an animated conversation by the tramp of horses, and from the windows beheld a body of dragoons approaching. Opposite the house a halt took place, and a splendidly-dressed officer, separating from the others, advanced to the door.

In a momentary glance at St. Leon, Helen thought she

detected a singular expression upon his face, and a passing indecision of manner; but if it were so, it was for an instant, and the young man quietly reseated himself.

A servant, entering the room, announced that Major Raynor, son of the Earl of Southdale, on his way to join Colonel Tarleton, had stopped to pay his respects to his father's old friend.

Mr. D'Arcourt hastened to meet his guest, and, returning, presented him to his daughter and St. Leon. Major Raynor was a tall, finely-formed man, apparently about thirty years of age. His face was eminently handsome; but a supercilious look upon it, and the steely glitter of the cold gray eye, marred its almost faultless beauty. He eyed St. Leon somewhat closely, and, soon after the introduction, drawing Mr. D'Arcourt apart from the others, questioned him regarding the young man. Mr. D'Arcourt replied by relating the occurrence of the morning. As the subject of their conversation made a movement toward departure, Major Raynor, quitting the side of his host, sternly but courteously addressed him:

"Mr. St. Leon will pardon me, when he considers the times in which we are living, and the often discourteous duty of a soldier. We have, sir, among others, the description of a namesake of yours, holding a commission under the arch-rebel and traitor, Francis Marion. May I ask if you are acquainted with him?"

"When I know by what right Major Raynor presumes to question me, I may perhaps reply," answered St. Leon, haughtily.

"It is enough," said Raynor, an exultant expression passing over his face. "Your refusal to reply is answer sufficient. Sir, I must detain you."

"Major Raynor," broke in Mr. D'Arcourt, passionately, "do you mean to insult me, by arresting a guest in my drawing-room?"

"Mr. D'Arcourt," returned the officer, "I owe you and your fair daughter apologies for my seemingly rude conduct; but my duty is imperative, and must be done, even at the risk of discourtesy. Mr. St. Leon, you are my prisoner."

"Yeou deoun't say! Neow dew tell!" said a voice behind him, and before the astounded officer could turn, a blow

descended upon his unprotected head that stretched him senseless upon the floor, and Ephraim, addressing St. Leon, said,

"I thought yeou'd need me, captin', when I watched the red-coats here, and so tracked yeou out. The horses are fastened just inside the wood, and I guess we'd better be movin'."

The advice was too good not to be acted upon, and St. Leon, bidding his entertainers a hasty farewell, quitted the room, with his faithful attendant.

A considerable extent of opening—now covered with the dismounted dragoons—lay between the house and woods, and St. Leon and his companion were compelled to pass through the midst of the soldiers, momentarily expecting Major Raynor to recover from the effects of the blow dealt by the sturdy arm of Ephraim. They had nearly reached the wood when these expectations were realized; the drawing-room window was thrown open, and Raynor sprung out upon the lawn, shouting fiercely to his men to stop the fugitives. The hoarse shout of,

"Halt! or we fire!" came quickly from behind them, followed by the discharge of several pistols. They reached their horses in safety, however, and hastily unfastening them, sprung into the saddles, and dashed down a road through the forest, closely pursued by over a score of horsemen. The fugitives soon entered a deep ravine, that they knew terminated in a swamp, and where safety awaited them; but a sudden turning in the ravine revealed to them an advancing party of ten English troopers, who had been scouting in the forest. Escape now seemed impossible; for the sides of the ravine at this place—composed of loose sand and gravel—rose almost perpendicularly for twenty feet. Yet one desperate gleam of hope shot through the mind of St. Leon, and shouting to Ephraim to follow, he reined his horse against the least precipitous bank; the noble animal, partly leaping and partly scrambling, succeeded in carrying his rider safely to the top.

Ephraim was less fortunate. Either the animal he bestrode was not so well trained as that of St. Leon, or he himself was not as skillful an equestrian. At the first trial the horse balked, and before there was time to repeat the experiment, the

enemy were upon him. Yet the gallant fellow was determined not to be taken without a struggle; drawing a pistol, he fired at the first man who approached, wounding him in the shoulder; but he would have been quickly dispatched by the others, had not Major Raynor, at this moment, dashed up.

"Hold!" he shouted. "Harm him not! A soldier's death is too good for him. Before to-morrow's sun sets, he shall hang high as Haman."

"Dew tell!" was Ephraim's laconic reply, and raising himself in the stirrups, he hurled the discharged pistol full at the head of Raynor. Fortunately the latter avoided the coming missile. Ephraim, overpowered, was securely bound, although more than one Englishman bore marks of the prowess of their single and unarmed antagonist.

Major Raynor, perceiving that any further attempt to capture St. Leon would prove fruitless, reluctantly relinquished the pursuit, and gave orders to return.

St. Leon overheard all that passed in the ravine beneath him, and as the threat of Raynor reached his ear, he put spurs to his horse, and rode away, as if well acquainted with the country he was traversing.

CHAPTER II.

A MINISTERIAL VISITANT.

ON his return Major Raynor sought an interview with Mr. D'Arcourt, and having explained to him the result of the pursuit, stated that his duty would compel him to remain in that vicinity during the night, and, if not inconvenient, he would trespass upon his hospitality. Whatever the true feelings of Mr. D'Arcourt may have been, prudence forbade any objection to a request that might easily have been made a demand, and he desired his guest to make such use of his house and grounds as would conduce to the comfort of himself and men.

After giving all necessary orders, Raynor went to the room

to which his prisoner had been conveyed. Here he found him upon a bed, bound hand and foot. It was evident that the treatment he received had not added to Ephraim's amiability, to judge by the way in which he glared at his captor.

"Who are you?" questioned Raynor.

"Yeou find eout, will yeou?" replied Ephraim.

"Look here, my man," said the major, "you will find that insolence will not improve your condition. Should you answer the questions I put to you, it may prove to your advantage."

"How do you expect a feller to answer questions trussed up in this way, like a goose ready for the spit? P'raps you'd like to try it yourself?" rejoined Ephraim, savagely.

Raynor had an object in view in his visit to his prisoner, and he reflected that a little lenity might conduce to the success of his scheme. He therefore called to the guard, stationed at the door, and bade him unbind the man. When this was done, Ephraim seated himself upon the side of the bed, and looked toward the British officer.

"Will you answer now?" asked the latter.

"Go ahead, Mister King George," said Ephraim. "You've done me one kindness, any how, and I will answer what my conshens will let me."

"What is your name?"

"Ephraim Peabody."

"Where do you belong?"

"Tew hum, when I'm there."

"Where is your home?"

"About ten miles from Bosting."

"What brought you here?"

"Well," replied Ephraim, with a droll look in his eye, "as near as I can make eout, about twenty red-coats on horse-back."

Raynor's patience was sorely tried, but he made one more effort, and asked:

"Do you know Marion?"

"Marion! Marion!" repeated Ephraim, reflectively. "Let me see. The name sounds kind of nateral. Oh, yes! neow I rekerlect; he was the old feller that used to travel round the country near Bosting, mending tin pans."

Raynor fairly bounded from his seat with rage; but, after a moment, he reseated himself, and bending a stern look upon his prisoner, said,

"Ephraim Peabody, I had determined to defer your execution at least until to-morrow; but if you persist in the course you have adopted, in answering me, even that grace shall be withdrawn, and one hour from the present moment will not find you in life. Now listen to me attentively. I know that you belong to the band of cut-throats and robbers commanded by Francis Marion, and I am convinced that you are cognizant of their present place of retreat. If you reveal their lurking-place to me, I will release you, insure you a pardon for all past offenses, and will myself give you the sum of one hundred pounds. On the contrary, should you persist in evasive answers, or an obstinate silence, as surely as there is a heaven above us, so surely shall you hang!"

While Raynor was speaking, Ephraim had time to reflect. He knew his only hope of safety consisted in the escape of St. Leon, and in time being allowed for aid to reach him from his comrades, and he determined to temporize with the Englishman, but hesitated in his answer, uncertain how to word it, to avoid creating suspicion. His silence was the best reply he could have given; for Raynor, noticing his hesitation, and ascribing it to the effect of his own words, thought that he would lose nothing by permitting the prisoner time for deliberation. Rising from his seat, he said,

"I will give you until ten o'clock to-morrow morning to deliberate upon my proposition. At that time you must be prepared to accept life, liberty and reward, or an ignominious death."

Ephraim could scarce avoid, while the officer was leaving the room, giving vent to his feelings of delight at this successful and unlooked-for termination of the interview.

The next morning, Major Raynor was informed that an itinerant preacher, having stopped at the house, and hearing that a man was under sentence of death, entreated permission to offer him spiritual consolation. Raynor was about to return a peremptory refusal; but a moment's reflection led him to the belief that the fearful picture of a future state of punishment, usually painted in glaring colors by these ghostly comforters,

might materially aid him in his designs upon the prisoner, and he therefore gave orders that the preacher should be admitted to the condemned man.

The minister was a very somber-looking individual; his straight black hair was parted in the middle, and combed down smoothly over the sallow cheeks; his eyes were covered with a pair of green goggles, and the lower part of his face was covered with a shawl. His slight person was protected from the damp air by a long cloak. On being ushered into the prisoner's room, the minister found Ephraim whistling assiduously, apparently but little troubled by his close proximity to death. He eyed the intruder curiously, but did not speak, or even desist from his musical performance. The minister addressed him in a drawling voice:

"My son—"

But he was interrupted by Ephraim, with:

"How are you, dad? When *did* you come over? Take a cheair, and make yourself tew hum."

"My son," again began the preacher, "this is no time for idle jesting. Consider that you are upon the brink of another world. The most noble Major Raynor has permitted me to attempt the preparation of your mind for the fearful change. Leave us," he added to the sentinel, who stood at the open door. "I wish to converse and pray alone with this unhappy man."

The soldier, mumbling some irreverent remark, closed and locked the door. No sooner was this done, than the reverend gentleman stepped lightly across the room, and, stopping, applied his eye to the keyhole. Apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, he approached the wonder-struck Ephraim, exhorting him to repent in a tone of voice that might be distinctly heard from the opposite side of the door. Unwrapping the shawl about his face, and removing the goggles from his eyes, the transformation was complete, and, instead of the ghostly-looking character who entered the room, Ephraim recognized his leader, the daring and dreaded rebel, Francis Marion, for whose capture Raynor would have sacrificed any thing he possessed.

"Dew tell!" ejaculated Ephraim. "Why, Gin—"

But his sentence was cut short by the hand of Marion,

placed upon his mouth, and a whispered command to remain silent. Replacing his disguise, the partisan officer, in a low tone, detailed to his subordinate the plan he had formed for his rescue, intermingling his conversation with advice befitting his assumed character, in a voice sufficiently raised to reach the ear of the sentinel. After Ephraim had been properly instructed in the part he was to play, Marion knocked at the door, in intimation of his wish to depart. As he was about to leave the room, he turned to the prisoner and said,

"Would that my duty permitted me to remain with you to the end; but it is impossible. During the short time that is still vouchsafed you on earth, ponder well upon my words."

"Thank ye; so I will," replied Ephraim. "Can't say but what you've done me a heap of good. Call again," he added, in his politeness seemingly oblivious to the brief period allotted him in which to receive visitors.

"He will have to go to a hot place to find you," growled the sentinel.

"P'raps so, if he hires you for a guide," rejoined Ephraim.

"Peace, fools! Cease your brawling!" interrupted the preacher.

"Right!" echoed a deep voice behind him, and turning, he met the penetrating gaze of Raynor. "You dress warmly, reverend sir," continued the latter.

It was a moment fraught with great peril to the disguised partisan; but not a shade paler turned the sallow cheek, not a muscle quivered in the slight frame, beneath the eye of the British officer. The answer came calmly, in the nasal, drawling voice:

"It hath pleased the Lord to afflict his servant, and what seemeth warmth to the hardy frame, sendeth a chill to the diseased body. I presume I have the honor of addressing the noble Major Raynor; if so, I have to thank you for access to yonder unfortunate man. Would that the Lord might inspire his servant with sufficient eloquence to move your heart to feelings of mercy, and cause you to reconsider your sentence."

"Stick to your Bible, preacher, and meddle not with my sword," said Raynor, haughtily. "You have done your duty; now leave me to do mine!"

With a meek air the preacher bowed, and turning, quitted the house.

When Raynor entered the room, the defiant air with which his prisoner regarded him needed not the words that followed to convince him that all further efforts to induce the latter to betray his comrades would prove fruitless.

"Well, Britisher," said Ephraim, "I have been turning over that 'ar matter in my mind, and guess it wouldn't pay to make a rascal of myself for your special 'commodation."

"Then die, dog!" hissed Raynor, infuriated at the defeat of his ambitious projects. Leaving the room, he proceeded to the lawn, and gave orders for immediate preparations for the execution, and the resumption of their march as soon as it was over.

On his return to the house, Raynor was met by Mr. D'Arcourt, who attempted an intercession with him in Ephraim's favor. The officer coldly but politely expressed to his host that the band of partisans were regarded as outlaws, and that it was his duty to put to death any of the members who should fall into his hands, even without form of trial. Mr. D'Arcourt still persevering in his endeavors, Raynor haughtily warned him against any further efforts on his part, intimating that he had already witnessed enough to justify him in arresting the gentleman himself.

At ten o'clock all the preparations were completed. The horses had been saddled and picketed along the roadside, and the men were drawn up in a hollow square, around a huge oak tree, that stood about midway between the house and woods. Over a projecting limb of this tree a cord was passed, one end of which had been formed into the fatal noose, and the other held by six troopers. Ephraim was led from the house by a corporal and a file of men, his arms securely bound. On entering the square he coolly surveyed the preparations made for his execution, and, turning to Raynor, said,

"I say, King George, couldn't you get any better fixings than these 'ere? If I was going to hang you, I guess I'd rig a nicer consarn^o than this."

Raynor deigned no reply, but, by a sign, commanded the men to proceed with the duty before them.

They now led Ephraim beneath the branch of the tree, and then retired to a short distance, the corporal approaching to place the noose about his neck; but as he raised his hands to perform the task, the soldier received a violent kick in the abdomen, from the prisoner, that stretched him upon the greensward, and Ephraim flung himself at full length upon the ground. Instantaneously a volley was poured into the ranks of the astonished Britons, killing and wounding at least twenty of them.

The confusion that ensued was terrible, and was heightened by the appearance of a body of horsemen, with drawn sabers—which terror magnified into an army—issuing from cover of the dense forest. All order was now lost among the English troopers, and a simultaneous rush was made for their horses. Gaining them, more than three-fourths of their number dashed down the road in fearful confusion.

In vain Raynor attempted to stem the wild flight. Some fifty of the bravest halted at the word of their commander, and with these hastily formed in line, he determined an attempt to withstand the shock of the coming charge. His gaze fixed upon the leader of the foe, who, mounted upon a powerful black charger, was some paces in advance of his men. As the eye of the rebel met that of the English officer, he raised his slight form somewhat in the saddle, and shouted,

“Ha! ha! Major Raynor! how like you the preacher, Marion?”

Instantly the scene with the clergyman of the morning flashed through the mind of the major, and, drawing a pistol, he discharged it at the advancing foe. The bullet passed through the cap of Marion, who, the next instant, was within reach of his enemy, and aimed a tremendous blow at his head, which, although partially warded off, yet descended with sufficient violence to cast the Briton, stunned and bleeding, from the saddle. The British soldiers, by a desperate effort, succeeded in momentarily checking the onset of the victorious rebels, and rescuing their fallen leader from his perilous position, commenced a rapid but well-ordered retreat. Marion, satisfied with the success of his attack, desisted from pursuit, and gave orders for the care of the wounded prisoners. Then,

turning to the young officer who rode at his side, he said,

"Now, St. Leon, we will go and pay our respects to your host of yesterday, and the enchantress whose acquaintance nearly cost you and Ephraim so dear."

At the door they were met by Mr. D'Arcourt, who warmly greeted them. When presented to Helen, Marion scarcely blamed his young follower for the somewhat extravagant encomiums upon her beauty in which he had indulged, while giving a description of her. The conversation soon became general, and Marion gave an animated account of St. Leon's return to the camp, their midnight ride to effect the release of Ephraim, and his own previous visit to the house, and interview with Major Raynor.

"During the conflict, general," said Mr. D'Arcourt, "I saw that Major Raynor fell beneath your sword. I trust the wound was not mortal; for, although far from prepossessed in the young man's favor, his father was formerly a very dear friend of mine, and I should regret to have such tidings reach him."

"No," replied Marion; "he is well enough by this time. He escaped with merely a stunning blow, and I do not regret it, for, whatever faults he may have, he is certainly a gallant soldier. No one could have behaved with greater coolness and courage, under such a complete surprise."

Mr. D'Arcourt was pleased with the soldier-like nobility of the man, who could find traits to praise in an enemy; and, when his guests at length took their departure, he was sincere in the wish expressed that the visit might be soon repeated.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGE WOMAN AND CHILD.

LATE in the afternoon of the same day, Helen D'Arcourt sat in her room, musing on the startling events that had lately taken place around them. Her life, heretofore, had been so peaceful, she could scarcely realize the exciting incidents of the past two days. Of the fact that war was existing in the country of her birth, she was, of course, aware; but the theater of action had hitherto been so far removed, that she possessed but little actual knowledge of what was taking place. Within the last twelve hours, a miniature battle had been fought under her eyes; she had heard the crack of the deadly rifle; the whistling of the leaden messengers of death; had seen the charge of horsemen, and the flash of gleaming steel, as human beings fell beneath the deadly stroke. These sights and sounds had filled her gentle spirit with horror and sorrow; but she could not help a feeling of pride as she thought of the daring gallantry of her countrymen, for her heart was with the party contending for freedom.

From these reflections she was roused by the entrance of a servant, who informed her that a poor woman, with a little deformed boy, was below, entreating food and shelter for the night. The young girl, ever alive to the sufferings of her fellow beings, immediately descended to the kitchen, where she found the wayfarer almost exhausted from fatigue and want of proper nourishment. Helen was much struck by their appearance. The woman was young, and her face, although marked by care and suffering, still retained traces of great former beauty, and, spite of the travel-stained dress, an air of refinement in her appearance bespoke days of happiness and prosperity in the past. The child, notwithstanding its deformity, was a beautiful little fellow. Helen felt her heart warm to both, and gave orders that every thing should be done that could conduce to their comfort.

The next morning the woman was too ill to rise from her

bed, and it was several days before she was able to stand. During this time Helen was unremitting in her attentions, and became so much interested in both mother and child, that she determined the wanderers should for the future find shelter beneath her father's roof. When she consulted him upon the subject, notwithstanding he entertained some prudential doubts, they were easily overcome by the arguments of his darling child, and he consented to the proposed arrangement.

When Helen imparted her project to her patient, the gratitude of the latter was unbounded ; but, before accepting the kind offer, she insisted upon making her young protector acquainted with her former history. This she did in the following words :

"I was not born to the destitution from which your noble charity has rescued me. My father was a wealthy merchant of the city of London, and the name of Mason stood high in the business world, for honor, integrity and wealth. My mother died shortly after my birth, and the care of rearing and educating me devolved upon my father, who faithfully performed his task. All the advantages that wealth could procure were lavished upon me, and never was child more tenderly raised.

"When I was sixteen years of age, my father purchased an elegant country residence, a short distance from the city, and here I should have felt perfectly happy, could I have persuaded my beloved parent to retire from business, and devote his time to myself; but upon this one subject he was firm in his refusal to me. Brought up from boyhood to a mercantile life, it had become a second nature to him, and he often half-jestingly assured me that he would retire from business and the world together.

"One morning, while taking my accustomed ride on horseback, something startled my usually docile steed, and he started upon a full run down the road. I did not, at first, feel much anxiety as to the consequences. I heard the groom, who followed, making every exertion to overtake me ; but his horse was inferior to my own, and was soon left far behind. The situation soon became truly alarming, for in my exertions to stop the furious career of the animal, the

bridle broke, nearly precipitating me from the saddle. I managed, however, to retain my seat, and clung desperately to the long mane. Onward dashed the horse, his pace appearing to accelerate instead of diminish, and still I clung to him. Stationary objects seemed to flit by me with lightning velocity. My head became dizzy, my eyes grew dim, and I felt as if death were upon me. Once more I mastered my feelings sufficiently to fix my gaze upon the road ahead, and the sight of an advancing horseman filled my heart with hope, and caused me to cling to my steed with renewed tenacity. The stranger sprang from his saddle, and, as my horse dashed up, with a powerful hand he seized the dangling rein; but, so great was the speed of the animal, that he was dragged several yards from the position he had taken. I waited not for the horse to come to a full stop; but the moment his career was checked, slipped from the saddle. I had scarcely touched the earth, when I beheld my deliverer struck down by the hoofs of the maddened brute. My own late peril was forgotten in anxiety for the stranger, and I used every means my childish experience could suggest to reanimate his prostrate form. When the groom came up, he, with more skill than myself, renewed these exertions, and they were finally successful; but it was evident the stranger had been very seriously injured. A passing carriage conveyed him to my father's house, and there for days he lay hovering between life and death. By the advice of the surgeons, my father used every exertion to discover the friends of the delirious, and, as we supposed, dying man. A note directed to 'Henry Montague, Esq.,' was found in one of his pockets; but, farther than the name, this afforded no clue to the stranger's identity. Advertisements were inserted in all the newspapers, but they remained unanswered.

"During this time I watched by the bedside of the sick man, with as much freedom as I would have done by that of a brother. I now believe it to have been ill-judged of my darling parent, to permit a girl as young and impressible as myself to be the constant attendant by the sick bed of a man like Henry Montague, and I soon began to know that the feeling of gratitude that first dictated my attentions, was giving way in my heart to a stronger passion.

“At length a perceptible change for the better took place in the condition of our guest, and four weeks from the day he was carried to his chamber, he was able to make his appearance in the drawing-room. Soon after he began to speak of departure, but to this my father would not listen. His feelings of gratitude had ripened into a warm friendship for the young man, and he absolutely insisted that he should make our house his home, until his health and strength should be fully restored. Mr. Montague made but a feeble resistance to this decision of his host, and he soon came to be considered as a member of the family.

“Days flew by rapidly, and the natural consequence of the intimate intercourse between Henry Montague and myself ensued. He declared his love for me, and I confessed mine in return. He urged me not to reveal our love until I received permission from him, representing that family reasons rendered such a disclosure ruinous to his future prospects. To this I consented, for my love for him overmastered every other principle in my nature, rendering my will meekly submissive to his own; and when, a short time thereafter, he urged me to a secret union, I made but a feeble resistance to his passionate entreaties. In an evil hour—forgetting the duty I owed to my kind old father, forgetful of every thing but my intense love—I consented to his wishes, and one morning we rode together to the city, where, in the presence of two witnesses—both strangers to myself—under a special license, I was privately married to Henry Montague.

“Soon after our marriage, my husband left our house and took apartments in London, but he was a frequent visitor, and always received a warm welcome from the kind old man whom we were both so basely deceiving. Months passed, and I was much less happy than I had anticipated. In addition to the deceit I was practicing upon my father, I fancied I perceived a growing coldness on the part of my husband. One day he came, at an hour when he knew my father would be absent, and told me he was called to Paris upon business of the utmost importance, but that upon his return he should immediately acknowledge our marriage. This assurance gave me new life for a time; but days, weeks and months passed away, without a word or line from him, and my agony

became terrible. My father must have noticed my changed manners, had not his mind, as I afterward had fearful reason to know, been distracted with cares of his own.

"About four months after Henry's departure, my father returned, one day, from the city, at an unusually early hour. As he met me, I was struck by the agitation of his manner, and the agony depicted in his countenance. I thought my secret was discovered, and was on the point of flinging myself prostrate before him to entreat pardon, but he took me tenderly in his arms, and kissed me, saying, in a strangely mournful tone,

" 'I do not feel well to-day, my child; I shall lie down until dinner time, and do not wish to be disturbed.' He put me gently down and passed on, but turning, took a letter from his pocket and handed it to me. My eye fell upon my husband's handwriting, and in the wild joy which filled my heart, all else was forgotten. I will not attempt to depict to you my anguish and despair, when I learned that he, whom my soul idolized, had basely deserted me. His words were few and cold. Becoming convinced, he said, that he had been deceived in regard to the sentiments he entertained for me, he should never return. It would be useless for me to attempt to trace him, for the name by which I knew him was not his true one, but had been assumed, while in Paris, some time before, to answer certain ends of his own.

"How long I sat gazing at the terrible words I know not. I was aroused from the stupor into which they had thrown me by the report of a pistol, that rung throughout the house. Mechanically I staggered toward my father's room, from which direction the sound had come. The door was fastened, and an ominous stillness reigned within. I shrieked aloud, and frantically strove to force open the barrier before me. The servants were soon about me, and the door was broken in. Stretched upon the floor lay my father, the deadly weapon still within his grasp, and the blood oozing from the place where the fatal ball entered. From that moment for weeks all was to me a blank, and to the faithful old nurse who attended me in infancy, and who did not desert me in my hour of need, I was indebted for all knowledge of what took place during that time.

"It was discovered that the immense fortune my father had acquired by a lifetime of toil and care, had been swept away by one unfortunate speculation, and in a moment of despair he took his own life. The old nurse, discovering my situation, and knowing that the house would soon be taken possession of by creditors, had me carefully removed to London, and there, in apartments she obtained, I gave premature birth to my poor deformed child.

"As soon as I was able, I made preparations to leave the country in which I had suffered so fearfully. Some three hundred pounds were saved from the wreck of my father's fortune, and with this I came to the colonies, and lived quietly in a village about thirty miles from here, until, some two weeks since, the place was pillaged and set fire to by marauders. I succeeded in escaping with my little boy, and a kind Providence guided me to your hospitable door. May God, in His mercy, reward you for the kindness you have shown to myself and my child."

Helen was deeply touched by the sad tale, and when she repeated the substance of it to her father, he was almost as much affected as herself. In former years he had been well acquainted, by reputation, with Mr. Mason, the merchant-millionaire of London, and felt deep compassion for the hapless fate that had befallen the forlorn woman, the first years of whose life opened so joyously.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STRANGE MAN.

FOR the next three or four weeks, all passed quietly at the residence of Mr. D'Arcourt. Since the morning Ephraim had been so opportunely rescued, nothing had been seen or heard of the partisan band, or the English troops, save general news of the progress of the war that from time to time reached Mr. D'Arcourt and his daughter. Sometimes they had intelligence of daring deeds performed by the rebels, as they dashed

through the Carolinas, pursued by the relentless Tarleton, who, tired out by a species of warfare that he neither understood nor appreciated, at length gave up the unprofitable chase in despair, with the characteristic remark, commemorated in history :

"Let us go and find the Game Cock" (meaning Sumter), "he will fight; but we can never catch this Swamp Fox."

But, Marion would not even permit him to give up the pursuit quietly; and the movements of the English commander were continually harrassed by the rebel chieftain.

The heart of Helen D'Arcourt beat high with pride, when she heard of the gallant exploits of her countrymen. Since her acquaintance with Marion and St. Leon, she felt a more than ordinary interest in the movements of the partisan band, and watched eagerly for news of their progress.

A favorite place of resort with Helen, was the banks of a stream that flowed through the property of Mr. D'Arcourt. Here, near a rustic bridge, where the high road crossed, she would often spend hours in reading or meditation. Since the arrival of Mrs. Montague and her child, the latter had been the constant companion of her rural recreations.

One day Helen was seated in this favorite spot, watching the troubled waters of the stream, for heavy rains had fallen that had swollen them far beyond their original bounds, and the quiet rivulet of a week ago had now become a deep and turbulent torrent, tossing and foaming at all obstructions, carrying with it drift-wood and logs in its onward course.

Warned by the declining rays of the sun, that it was time to return to the house, Helen turned to look for her little charge, who had been playing near her. As she did so, the child, seeing a flower growing upon the bank of the stream, stooped over and broke the stem; the quick tramp of a horse upon the bridge startled the little fellow; he lost his balance and fell into the water. Helen, in the frenzy of the moment, would have plunged in after him, had not a powerful arm restrained her. Drawing her back from the bank, the stranger, flinging off his hat and coat, jumped into the rapid stream, and soon succeeded in seizing the boy; but, although an expert swimmer, his task was one of no ordinary peril; for, encumbered by his wet clothes and the drowning child—the

floating drift-wood materially adding to the danger—with a heart less bold, or an arm less strong, his humanity might have proved fatal to himself.

At length he reached the shore, and bidding Helen lead the way, followed her with the senseless child in his arms. Upon the bed in Helen's room he laid the burden; then, seeing there were enough about to aid in the attempt at resuscitation, he quietly withdrew.

As he passed through the hall, he encountered Mr. D'Arcourt. It was now the dusk of the evening, and objects were rendered indistinct in the fading light; but enough yet remained to enable the two men to get a view of each other's faces. Upon Mr. D'Arcourt the effect of the meeting seemed overpowering. He turned deathly pale, and murmuring:

"My God! can such things be?" he staggered against the wall, and apparently lost all consciousness. After a few moments he recovered, and looked around; he was now alone, yet he still gazed about with a bewildered look. At last he spoke in a strangely broken voice:

"It must have been imaginary! Yet I was not thinking of him at the time; and then it was all so fearfully distinct—the hatless head—the dripping clothes. Oh, God! what can this portend?" and he retired to his room with a faltering step and troubled face.

The manner of the stranger had been altogether different. Although a look of recognition appeared upon his face, no signs of surprise or alarm could be traced there. For a moment his lips parted, and he seemed about to address Mr. D'Arcourt, while a softer expression appeared in his cold, stern eye; but it instantly disappeared, giving place to the same haughty look as before, and, without speaking, he passed from the house. When he reached the bridge, he put on his hat and coat, and mounted his horse, that was quietly cropping the grass by the roadside. As he rode slowly along, his thoughts took shape as follows:

"Perhaps, after all, he may be innocent. But no! How terrified he was at the sight of me. Innocence has no cause for fear; guilt alone trembles; I could not be mistaken in my recognition of him at the time. Would to God that I could believe it might be so! No matter; I still adhere to the

resolution I formed so many years since, and leave him, as I left the other, to the punishment of his own conscience."

Gathering up the slackened reins, he proceeded rapidly down the road. The moon soon after rose, and he did not permit his horse to slacken his pace for some ten miles, when he reined up at a place where the road forked. Taking a silver whistle from his pocket, the stranger blew three distinct notes. He was soon joined by two horsemen, with whom the reader is already acquainted—Marion and his youthful follower, St. Leon—the former of whom greeted the stranger as "Mr. St. Leon," and the latter as "My father." Having returned the salutations of both, he said to Marion :

"You received my message, then, General? I had begun to fear it might have miscarried."

"It came safe enough," replied the partisan; "but, let us return to the camp before entering on business. You must be tired and need refreshment. I can not boast much of my arder; but to such as it is you shall be welcome."

The rebel chieftain took the lead, and guided the way into a dark swamp. After passing an outpost they gained a piece of rising ground—a sort of island in the swamp—where the band was encamped. Ordering refreshments for his guest, Marion left him and his son to the privacy for which he knew they both wished.

When the young officer related to his father his first meeting with Helen D'Arcourt, and the subsequent events that ensued, Mr. St. Leon listened with a clouded brow, and, at length, rather abruptly said :

"Ernest, you know my affection for you well enough to be certain that I would not give you advice contrary to what I believed for your own good. Is it not so?"

"Your advice, my dear father, has ever been respected by me," replied Ernest.

"I have always found you a good son," returned Mr. St. Leon. "I am now, however, about to give advice which, to you, may seem unreasonable; for I can not explain myself fully, and can only request you to respect my wishes, without inquiring too closely into my reasons. I much regret that fate has thrown you into the way of the D'Arcourts, and wish you in future to avoid them as far as possible. Many years ago,

Mr. D'Arcourt wronged me in a manner I can never forgive, and I do not consider him a proper acquaintance for my son. Another request I must make of you, my son: in *every way* avoid Major Raynor. Should you chance to meet him in the shock of battle, turn aside, even at the risk of an accusation of cowardice. As you value your father's blessing, Ernest St. Leon—as you value your own peace of mind forever after in this world, and your eternal salvation in the next—I charge you never to allow your hand to be raised against that man.”

Mr. St. Leon had become strangely excited during this speech, and Ernest gazed in wonder upon his usually cold and quiet father. But although the injunction against acquaintance with the D'Arcourt's cost him more than he was willing to confess, he did not think about disobeying the commands of his parent, and promised to pay heed to his requests.

The next morning, after a long interview with General Marion, Mr. St. Leon took his departure from the camp.

Who shall attempt to describe the anguish of the broken-hearted mother, when she beheld her darling child, the last remaining tie that bound her to earth, stretched apparently lifeless before her. She did not weep, for the burning brain seemed to have dried up the fountains of grief, and the relief of tears was denied her. In speechless agony she gazed upon the little form that others were striving to reanimate. Power to assist in this work she had none; but, with a stony look of despair, she stood speechless, tearless and unaiding. At length her anguish found vent in words.

“Father in heaven!” she cried, “has not my punishment already sufficed, that even this dread blow must come upon me? My darling! my only blessing and hope! have you, too, gone from me? Merciful father! allow me once more to behold the light of those dear eyes; or, in mercy, terminate my sufferings, and permit me to join my boy.”

It seemed as if her prayer had been answered, for unmistakable signs of returning animation began to exhibit themselves. Gradually the breath came back in fitful gasps, and the eyes slowly unclosed; but, as soon as the physician who had been summoned examined him, he saw that the delicate organization of the little fellow had received too severe a

shock for its vitality to withstand, and that life could not long be retained within the feeble frame.

Painful as was the task, Dr. Wellmore felt it to be his duty to prepare the poor mother for the inevitable event, and, gently and feelingly as possible, he communicated his belief.

"So long as there is life there is hope," he said; "but my skill can effect no more. The result we must leave to the mercy of Him who gave life, and who has power to destroy or preserve it, according as He, in His infinite wisdom, shall decide."

The unfortunate mother heard the words of doom in mute despair.

During the night the kind-hearted physician and Helen watched with the mother beside the dying boy. The grief of the girl was great, for their short acquaintance had served to endear the child to her in no ordinary degree.

Suddenly the little sufferer raised himself upon the bed, and gazed around with a vacant look. The grief-stricken mother caught her darling to her breast in a passionate embrace. As he felt the touch of those arms, the vacant expression passed from the boy's face, and a momentary beam of intelligence lighted his eyes, as they rested fondly upon the agonized countenance before him. It was brief, however; a spasm shot through the little frame, and, with the word "Mother!" issuing from the lips, it fell back, and the pure spirit, uncontaminated by the world, took its flight to the bosom of Him who gave it.

At first Mrs. Montague did not realize the calamity which had befallen her; but when the full extent of her misery burst upon her mind, with a shriek of agony she sunk senseless by the body of her dead child. Tears rained from the eyes of Helen, and even Dr. Wellmore, inured as he was to scenes of misery, could not restrain the moisture that dimmed his sight; but, overcoming his emotion, he gave orders for the removal of the happily-unconscious mother to another chamber, where he proceeded to apply restoratives. As soon as she unclosed her eyes, their wild and unceasing stare told the man of experience that reason had been dethroned. A violent fit of illness ensued, her life for several days hanging upon a thread, and the physician felt it would be a mercy if

she did not recover ; but he considered himself but an instrument in the hands of a higher power, with whom the decision rested, and that his duty was to use his utmost skill to save life.

CHAPTER V.

THE ORDER.

Two days subsequent to the death of little Henry Montague, in an elegantly-furnished room of a house in the city of Charleston, sat two men of equally striking but very dissimilar appearance. The elder of the two was apparently about fifty years of age. His tall and finely-developed form gave token of the strength and activity of youth. His face was noble and commanding ; the large gray eyes—still clear and undimmed—had a look of coldness, as if schooled to conceal, rather than express, the inward workings of the mind ; upon the high, expansive brow, appeared furrows, caused by care and thought ; the heavy jaw, large but firmly-compressed mouth, and Roman nose, completed a physiognomy better adapted to expressing the sterner than the softer attributes of man. Yet, when he smiled there was a softening of the lineaments that might lead one to suppose the cold, haughty look that usually sat there, resulted from culture, and not nature. He was dressed richly, yet plainly, in the garb of a civilian.

His companion, who was some years younger, wore the splendid uniform of scarlet and gold denoting a British officer of high rank. His form, unlike that of the other, was short and thickset. His face was agreeable rather than strongly marked or handsome ; yet no one could look into that countenance, or meet the glance of the quick, penetrating eyes, without feeling himself in the presence of a more than ordinary man. Such was Lord Cornwallis, commander-in-chief of the British forces in the south, the ablest general England ever sent to America.

It was evident that the two were on intimate terms, for

they addressed one another in the most familiar manner. Their conversation appeared to have been one of great interest.

"Your story is a strange one, Henry," said Cornwallis; "but your conduct appears to me stranger. I remember well your noble and generous nature when, as a boy, I fagged for you at Westminster, and we afterward renewed our friendship at Cambridge; but your present course would imply a nobility of soul of which I did not believe human nature capable, and I am free to confess I can neither understand nor appreciate it. Why should you permit one who has so foully wronged you—no matter how near or dear he may formerly have been—to quietly usurp your rights, and so long live in the enjoyment of them? Nay, more than this—not content with your deprivation of property and name, you now seek to shield the double traitor from merited punishment for acts of disloyalty to his king."

"My lord," replied the other, somewhat coldly, "I came not here to seek for commendation of my character or conduct, but to entreat a favor at the hands of Charles Cornwallis, the friend of former years, trusting, unless the world had changed the innate generosity of his disposition, my request would not be denied. My story I was compelled to relate to you, for you, in common with all others—save one—believing me dead, it was necessary to account in some way for my resurrection, and I knew of no other than frankly to tell the truth, well knowing that my confidence would never be betrayed. As to my conduct, strange as it appears to you, it has been dictated by my conscience. Perhaps, also, other motives may have had weight with me. Think you, laying all other feelings aside, I would permit myself to affix the felon's brand to a name that, through so many generations, descended to me unsullied? In regard to the favor I have asked, I can only entreat your pardon for having so long troubled you, and beg that my visit may be forgotten."

"Nay, do not be offended at my plain speaking, my friend," rejoined Cornwallis. "I should deeply regret to offend one to whom I owe so deep a debt of gratitude as to yourself. Whatever rebels may say or think of Charles Cornwallis, he has not yet become so thoroughly contaminated by contact

with the world as to forget the days of yore, and the time when, at the risk of your own life, you dragged the drowning boy from the mill-race."

"I should scorn to remind you of an act of ordinary humanity, my lord, even did I know it would insure the granting of my petition," interrupted the other.

"It needed no reminder from you to aid my memory," answered the nobleman; "but, Henry, as to the request you have made, there are many things to be considered. My present position is not an enviable one, surrounded as it is with difficulties and dangers. Commanding in a country one half the population of which is in open rebellion, and the other portion awaiting an opportunity to pursue a similar course, my position is one of great responsibility, and I ought not to allow my private feelings to interfere with my duty to my king and my country."

"But in this instance, my lord, I have already assured you that there has been no just grounds for the course about to be adopted."

"Well, Henry, I will grant your request," said Cornwallis. "You, at least, shall not have it to say that you found me ungrateful and harsh," and going to a desk he wrote for a few minutes, then handed the paper to his companion, saying, "Will that answer your purpose?"

"Fully, my lord," said the latter, after perusing it; "and most heartily do I thank you for the favor. Yet I fear I shall have to tax your kindness still further. It is my wish to be the bearer of this order. Can you give me credentials to insure its being respected, being borne by a civilian?"

The English commander, taking another paper, dated it at his head-quarters, and then wrote as follows:

"Officers and soldiers belonging to this army will respect the bearer as the friend of the commander-in-chief."

This he signed and handed to his companion with the remark:

"This is rather a loose way of giving credentials, but I fear not to trust you."

"Your confidence shall never be betrayed," replied the other, and, once more expressing his thanks, he took his departure.

CHAPTER VI.

A MAJOR'S WOOING.

For eight days after the death of her child, no change took place in the condition of Mrs. Montague ; but, on the morning of the ninth, some slight signs of improvement appeared, and Helen, worn out by watching, retired to her chamber to seek repose.

A strange alteration had taken place in Mr. D'Arcourt within the past ten days. As he now sat in his library, apparently lost in gloomy reverie, a careworn look was upon his naturally cheerful face, and he would frequently rise from his seat and pace the floor in a nervous manner, in singular contrast with his usual calm demeanor.

From his present abstraction, the gentleman was aroused by sounds from without, betokening an arrival. Pausing in his walk, before the window, he beheld Major Raynor, accompanied by twenty or thirty soldiers, just in the act of dismounting before his door. The visit was any thing but agreeable to Mr. D'Arcourt, but both prudence and politeness dictated the propriety of receiving his guest with civility, and when they met his greeting was courteous. Something like embarrassment appeared in the demeanor of the usually self-possessed soldier, as he returned the salutation of his host.

"Mr. D'Arcourt," he said, "it deeply grieves me to be the bearer of disagreeable intelligence to your hospitable mansion, and I trust you will remember that I am but an instrument in the hands of others, in the performance of my present painful duty. Colonel Tarleton, having received somewhat exaggerated information of the occurrences that took place when I was last here, believed that you were in some way connected with the band of outlaws, and determined upon your arrest. I assure you, sir, upon my honor, that he did not receive the information from myself; on the contrary, I sought Colonel Tarleton, and used all the influence I possess to cause him to change his resolution. He answered me with

a peremptory order to take such a force as might be necessary, arrest and keep you a close prisoner in your own house until his arrival, which he anticipated would be within three or four days."

All that was vacillating or indecisive in the nature of Mr. D'Arcourt seemed to vanish in the actual presence of a palpable danger, and, as he answered the British officer, his words, look and manner were characterized by the proud, defiant spirit of his haughty race.

"I thank you, Major Raynor," he said, "for the exertions *you say* you made use of in my behalf; and can only regret that your superior officer should have considered it necessary to punish you so severely for your interference, as to impose the unpleasant task of my arrest upon yourself. I submit myself as your prisoner, sir, for the simple reason that I have no power to do otherwise. Had I ten efficient men at my command, he would need to be a bold man, who, with even double their number at his back, should dare to cross my threshold upon a similar errand; but as my present garrison consists, beside myself, of a sick woman, a young girl and a few old slaves, I can but perceive that any attempt at resistance would prove worse than futile. The charges against me are frivolous, and it occurs to me that Colonel Tarleton must be an extremely unreasonable man, if you, with your personal knowledge of the circumstances of the case, could not convince him that they were so. The only time I ever saw Francis Marion was when, after surprising and driving from my grounds a body of British troops, with less than half their number of men, he presented himself at my door. It is somewhat difficult, in these times, Major Raynor, to deny hospitality to any one introducing himself with sabers and fire-arms. With the same show of justice with which this arrest is made, Marion, at some future day, may again arrest me for my present hospitality to yourself. But enough of this; it is not yet time for me to answer the paltry charge preferred. I presume, sir, that Miss D'Arcourt is not included in this arrest, and I must beg permission to send her to the house of a friend, for you must yourself perceive that a prisoner is scarcely a competent protector for a young lady, amid a garrison of soldiers."

A storm of passion gathered upon the handsome face of Raynor, as he listened to this speech; but before its conclusion he gained sufficient control over himself to reply with a certain degree of calmness.

"Your implied insults to myself, sir, must of necessity pass unnoticed. Neither your daughter nor any one else can be allowed to leave this house until the arrival of Colonel Tarleton shall relieve me from responsibility. You, sir, must retire to your chamber, at the door of which a guard will be placed, and no one will be permitted to communicate with you, except by my orders."

As he concluded, Major Raynor summoned a guard, and escorted his prisoner to his chamber.

The news of Mr. D'Arcourt's arrest quickly spread through the house, and Helen's maid awoke her mistress with the startling intelligence. In terror the poor girl hastened to seek her father; but, at the door of his room, was denied admission. She then sought Major Raynor, and in moving terms entreated permission to visit her father. He treated her with the utmost courtesy, and, after some apparent hesitation, gave orders that she should be allowed to remain in the prisoner's room one hour.

In the afternoon, while seated in the drawing-room, Major Raynor was informed that a bearer of dispatches from Colonel Tarleton had arrived, and desired personally to place them in his hands. As the courier entered, in obedience to his orders, Major Raynor was much surprised to behold in Tarleton's messenger a gentleman of commanding presence, dressed as a civilian. As he handed the dispatches to Raynor, the latter said:

"Has Colonel Tarleton so much work for his soldiers that he could not spare one for a courier?"

"It was at my own request I was selected," was the quiet reply.

Raynor broke the seals; but, as his eye fell upon the contents, a dark frown gathered upon his brow. They were brief, dated at head-quarters of the British army, and read as follows:

"On receipt of this, Colonel Banastre Tarleton will immediately stop all further proceedings in the matter of Charles

D'Arcourt. Should that gentleman have been already arrested, Colonel Tarleton will cause him to be set at liberty.

“(Signed,) CORNWALLIS.”

Beneath this was written, in a scrawling hand that Raynor knew well:

“In compliance with the above order from the commander-in-chief, Major Raynor will release Charles D'Arcourt, and with the men under his command, without delay, will report at these head-quarters. (Signed,) BANASTRE TARLETON.”

For a few moments Raynor gloomily reflected, but his active mind rapidly resolved on the course to pursue, and turning to the messenger he sternly demanded,

“From whom did you receive these dispatches?”

“First from Lord Cornwallis, and then from Colonel Tarleton,” was the ready reply; but as it was given, Raynor encountered an eye fully as stern and undaunted as his own, and felt that he had no ordinary man to deal with.

“Are you acquainted with their contents?” he inquired.

“Major Raynor,” answered the messenger, haughtily, “I did not come here to submit to interrogations. The dispatches you know to be genuine. Now that I have seen them read by you I have done my duty, and will leave you to the fulfillment of yours.”

He would have quitted the room, but Raynor placed himself before him, and again addressed him:

“You do not quit me thus, sir! You forget whom you are addressing, when you assume your present defiant air.”

“Major Raynor is unaware whom he is addressing, therefore I will pardon him,” was the stern reply.

“But I will know, before we part,” returned Raynor, hotly. “I shall arrest you, sir, until this mysterious affair has been further explained.”

“You dare not,” came the calm reply.

Raynor, livid with Rage, broke forth with a fierce oath, but was checked by a commanding gesture from the stranger, who, in spite of himself, he felt overawed him.

“Peace, sir,” said the latter. “Use not the name of your Creator thus lightly. I meant no imputation upon your courage, for I wish your other virtues were equal to this one. This, sir,” drawing a paper from his pocket, “is a security

against personal molestation that *even you* dare not disregard."

Raynor felt as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet when he recognized a pass from Cornwallis, recommending the bearer as a personal friend of his own. Making a somewhat confused apology for his conduct, the major suffered the stranger to depart.

The latter, on quitting the room, cast a quick glance about him, and seeing that his movements were unobserved, entered a small apartment adjoining the drawing-room.

For some time Raynor paced backward and forward in deep meditation; but finally his mind appeared settled upon some course, for, summoning a servant, he sent a request to Helen, that she would grant him an interview upon business of vital importance. She, fearing to exasperate by refusal the man who held such power over them, soon descended to the drawing-room. Declining the seat he placed for her, she awaited what he had to communicate.

"I know, Miss D'Arcourt," he said, "the light in which my conduct must be viewed by you; yet I pray you to believe that I would willingly aid your father to the full extent of my ability. To this end I have begged the honor of this interview; that, while I am compelled to pain you by communicating a new and painful feature in his case, I may offer consolation by suggesting means of escape from the threatening doom."

"Oh, what is it? What new horror is implied by your speech?" cried Helen, struck with terror at the vague hints of impending evil hanging over her father.

"Be calm, Miss D'Arcourt," replied Raynor, kindly, but with a degree of solemnity in his manner, that but added to the poor girl's excitement. "I told you I knew of a means of escape for your father, but must first tell you with what he is threatened. Lord Cornwallis, having become convinced of his guilt, has dispatched orders for his immediate execution."

With a shriek of agony Helen sank backward, for some moments stupefied by the appalling intelligence; but a gleam of hope suddenly lighted her ghastly face, and she cried, wildly,

"But you said there was a means of escape. Oh! then you can save him! You will save my father!" and in her agony the fair girl flung herself at the feet of the evil-minded man.

For a moment, perhaps, the heart of Raynor relented, as he witnessed her suffering; but the feeling was momentary, and quickly suppressed, and he could scarcely conceal the triumph he felt, as he thought how easily, in her present frame of mind, he could mould the girl to his wishes, through her love for her father. Raising her from the floor, and placing her on the seat from which she had arisen, he said:

"Nay, kneel not to me, Miss D'Arcourt; I have no power directly over your father's fate; with yourself it all rests."

"With me!" answered the sobbing girl. "Oh, tell me but how I can aid him? I would gladly allow my life to be sacrificed to save his."

"I trust the alternative will not prove quite so terrible," replied Raynor. "Listen calmly to all I have to say. There is but one way that the impending doom can be averted. On one condition I will suspend the execution of the imperative orders I have received, until such time as representations can be made to Cornwallis that will insure the release of your father. Helen D'Arcourt I love you truly and sincerely, and by becoming my wife you can save your parent, for the English commander would pardon in me an act of disobedience by means of which I saved the life of one so near to me."

For some time Helen was so bewildered as scarcely to comprehend the meaning of his words; and Raynor, auguring well from her continued silence, dropped upon one knee before her, and raised her hand to his lips. This act awoke the girl from the species of trance into which she had been thrown, and aroused all the maiden dignity of her nature. Withdrawing her hand, she arose, and, with a queenly look of scorn, confronted Raynor.

"Major Raynor," she said, "well sustains the character of a British officer, by insulting a defenseless girl, whose only earthly protector is a prisoner in his hands."

Raynor sprung to his feet, his eyes glowing with passion, stung to the quick by her contemptuous manner.

"Helen D'Arcourt," he said, "now make your choice. Either to-morrow evening at sunset you shall become my wife, or your father's corpse shall swing before his own door."

"You can not mean it!" shrieked the agonized girl. "You will never be so cruel and unjust."

"I have said it," replied Raynor, sternly. "It now remains with yourself to decide your father's fate; upon your word hangs his life."

"I can not love you," moaned the miserable girl.

"That matters not now," answered Raynor; "love will come with time. Speak, shall your father live or die?"

"I can not let my father perish," she sobbed. "God forgive me, if I am doing wrong; but, have it as you will, harsh, cruel man. You have driven your bargain with the child for her father's life. Now leave me in peace, until the time shall come to consummate the sacrifice."

Raynor had attained all he desired, and retired from the room, his heart filled with triumph at the success of his scheme.

Helen flung herself upon a sofa, and sobbed aloud:

"Can it be," she exclaimed, "that a merciful God will suffer me thus to be sacrificed?"

"With God all things are possible, and He who rules both heaven and earth, may even yet stretch forth His hand to preserve you," answered a deep voice near her.

Helen started to her feet in fear and wonder, at this singular interruption. Her alarm was scarcely lessened when she beheld, standing by her in the dim twilight, the majestic form of the stranger who had dragged little Henry Montague from the water. She gazed upon him with a feeling akin to awe, for his sudden appearance, to her excited mind, seemed almost supernatural.

"Helen D'Arcourt," pursued the stranger, in a low tone, "do not fear me, for I would assist you. I am here, at some risk to myself, for the sole purpose of rendering assistance to yourself and your father, who in former years did me a great wrong. I have overheard your conversation with him who has just left you, and for his sake as well as your own, I would fain prevent the outrage he is about to perpetrate. Major Raynor has just declared to you that to-morrow night shall

witness your bridal or your father's death, and from all I have seen of him I doubt not he will keep his word, if he has the power. You must continue to make him believe that you consent to his demands, but delay the ceremony as long as possible. The result you must leave in other hands. At the very foot of the altar, if not sooner, you shall be saved, or I have much miscalculated my own power. In the mean time your father must be apprised of what is going forward. Major Raynor will not permit you to visit him at the present time, so I suppose the duty, painful as it will be, must devolve upon myself. Have you any servant in the house, upon whose fidelity you can depend?"

Helen immediately thought of old Cato, and replied to the stranger accordingly.

"Very well," he answered; "after dark let him manage to enter the room adjoining this, where I will remain concealed. Give him to understand that he must obey me strictly in every thing, and that upon his obedience, caution and fidelity depend the safety of his master and mistress. And now my child," he added, approaching Helen, and taking her unresisting hand, "you will not fear an old man's kiss or disregard his blessing. What I have overheard this evening has found a more tender spot in my heart than I supposed existed there. Leave me now, and rest this night in peace, placing your trust in God, and the human instrument He has selected for your protection."

The stately head was bent, and a kiss pressed upon the fair brow of the girl. With a heart filled with hope, she retired to her chamber, and sending for Cato, instructed him in the part he was to perform.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MIDNIGHT VISION.

AT night guards were stationed about the house, as a precaution against any attempt of the prisoner to escape, the rest of the soldiers being quartered in an outhouse about two hundred paces from the main building. The major inspected all the arrangements personally. He was a rigid disciplinarian even in minute details. The sentinel before Mr. D'Arcourt's door, on this night, was an example of the severity of his commander. For some slight infraction of discipline, the poor fellow had been condemned by the martinet to stand upon his post throughout the night, instead of being relieved in two hours, as was customary.

The unfortunate man paced the confined beat that had been allotted him, inwardly cursing the strict ideas of duty entertained by his stern officer, but fearing to give audible vent to his imprecations. About ten o'clock a death-like silence pervaded the house, betokening that its inhabitants were in deep sleep, and no sound broke the monotony of the soldier's watch, except the steady tramp of the guards on the outside. Half an hour later, however, a slight sound at the opposite end of the dimly-lighted passage, attracted the attention of the sentinel, who detected a dark figure moving stealthily across the hall. Bringing his gun hastily to his shoulder, he demanded,

"Who goes there?"

No answer came, but the sentinel could see that the object, whatever it was, had drawn itself close to the wall, and remained motionless. Again the stern challenge was made:

"Who goes there? Answer quick, or I fire!"

This had the desired effect, for the reply came quickly, in a tremulous, terror-stricken voice:

"For de lub ob de good God, don't shoot, massa soldier, or you'll kill dis nigga, sure!"

"Ha! blackey," returned the soldier, "that last brought

you to time, did it? Come out here, under the light, and let's see what you look like."

With a trembling step, and terrified countenance, old Cato advanced into the light, carrying a small basket, carefully covered, in his hand.

"What have you got there?" demanded the soldier, his eyes fixed upon the basket.

"Nuffin', sar," responded Cato, placing the article in question behind him.

"Nothing, you black rascal," returned the sentinel, angrily, again threatening Cato with the gun. "Now come right straight here, and show me what's in that basket, or I'll let daylight through that black carcass of yours."

This threat again brought Cato forward, as he replied, tremblingly :

"Don't poke de gun at me, massa soldier. It might go off, and make a hole in dis darkey. I hain't got nuffin' here, sar, 'cept a little supper for poor old Cato in de night."

The soldier snatched at the basket, and pulling off the covering, he beheld the remains of a chicken pie, and a large bottle of wine. Fixing his eyes severely upon the terrified negro, he said :

"Look here, blackey ! you've been robbing your master, because he's a prisoner, and according to the rules of war, you ought to be shot ; but, as your master is a rebel, I'll pardon you. These things, though, belong to a rebel, and must be confiscated for the good of the true government ; so I'll take possession of them. Now you go to your own quarters, straight, and if I catch you prowling about here again, I'll shoot you, sure as my name is Jack Williams."

Cato did not wait for a second bidding, but disappeared with as much speed as his trembling limbs would admit.

Jack Williams, as he had styled himself, commenced a vigorous attack upon the pie, which he washed down with copious draughts from the bottle. He did not desist from the pleasing employment until the last fragment of food had disappeared, and the last drop had been drained. Then, however, a most wonderful feeling of drowsiness began to creep over him, which he in vain attempted to combat by resuming his now somewhat unsteady walk. Finally, finding himself

unable to keep his feet, he seated himself upon the carpet, near the door, and was soon buried in a profound slumber.

He had not been asleep more than twenty minutes when another form made its appearance in the hall, but a very different one from that of Cato. The majestic figure, and fearless, yet cautious step, afforded a strong contrast to the bent form, terrified manner and shuffling tread of the old negro. Advancing straight toward the sentinel, he bent over him for a moment, then opened the door and passed into the chamber. A lamp was burning in the room, and by its light the intruder discerned the form of Mr. D'Arcourt stretched upon his couch in a deep sleep. The door was opened and closed so cautiously, that the slumber of the prisoner remained undisturbed, and the intruder, approaching the bedside noiselessly, gazed earnestly into the calm, dignified face of the sleeper. As he gazed, a look of intense affection momentarily crept over that haughty countenance; but it was quickly banished, and the old stern, cold expression resumed its sway. Yet, withal, there was a troubled look in the eye, as he murmured, almost inaudibly:

"Can guilt sleep so peacefully? Do not the demons of remorse haunt even the slumbers of the fratricide? Oh! would to God that I could believe him innocent. But this can not be—the evidence of my own eyes could not deceive me! And I am here now to save him from ignominious death! Better, perhaps, leave him to his justly-merited fate! Yet, no! I can not do this, if on no other account, for the sake of the sweet girl who calls him father, and to whom I have pledged myself to save him from his fearful doom! She, at least, has done nothing that merits vengeance, and I will save them both, if God grants me power."

At this stage of his meditations he was interrupted by the uneasy movements of the sleeper. An agonized expression appeared gradually stealing over the before placid features, and soon words came audibly from the lips.

"William!" moaned the prisoner, "it can not be true! I will not believe that you were capable of committing so dreadful a crime! Our noble, true-hearted brother, too, who would gladly have shared his possessions with either of us! Take back the fearful words, nor let my future life be haunted by

the dread secret your dying lips have revealed! My God! preserve me from the thought!"

A hasty motion and exclamation from the midnight visitor partially aroused the convulsed sleeper, and he slowly unclosed his eyes; but the sight that met them appeared to add to his late slumbering terrors; for, starting violently up on his couch, he stared wildly, for a moment, at his visitor, and then, sinking back upon the pillow, murmured, in a broken voice:

"Am I really losing my reason, that my fevered brain should again conjure up such fantasies?"

"Charles D'Arcourt," said a deep, stern voice, beside him, "it is no conjuration of a fevered imagination that stands beside you, but the same brother, in flesh and blood, whom, more than twenty years since, you and William supposed you had slain. By almost a miracle, God preserved my life, and you from the crime of fratricide. No wonder that the appearance of this foully-wronged brother should strike terror to your guilty soul!"

During this speech the prisoner had again arisen on the bed, and gazed wonderingly in the face of the speaker; but as the latter concluded—apparently convinced of his identity—he sprung from the couch and flung his arms about his brother, exclaiming:

"Oh, God! I thank thee. Oh, Henry! the delight of this hour! It almost compensates for the years of agony I have endured. But," he added, as the purport of what his brother had said forced itself upon his mind "how deeply you have wronged me, by the suspicion your words would imply. At the time of your supposed death, I was more than fifty miles distant from the spot, and, until the hour of William's death, I, in common with the rest of the world, believed you had been accidentally drowned. At that time, he revealed to me the fearful secret that oppressed his soul. How could you believe me guilty of so horrible a crime?"

"Can this be true?" said he, who in future must be known as Henry D'Arcourt. "Yet how can I reconcile your words with the fact that I saw you with William on that fatal night? Although I had not seen you for months before, and was even unaware of your return from your tour on the continent, yet I could not be mistaken in that once dearly loved face, that a

flash of lightning revealed to me. No, Charles, add not falsehood to your other crimes, for it is useless."

"Before heaven, Henry, I solemnly swear that I am innocent of ever having wronged you, in thought or deed," answered the younger brother, his face expressing the intense agony of his soul, at his brother's disbelief in his innocence. "Ah! now," he continued, more calmly, "my scattered senses begin to return to me, and a new light breaks upon my mind. William confessed to me that he had an accomplice; but refused to give his name. Henry, did you ever see our cousin, Gregory Marland?"

"Never," replied the elder, eagerly, a joyous expression of hope lighting up his countenance. "Yet I have heard of the remarkable resemblance existing between you."

"His face and form so exactly correspond with mine," continued his brother, "that we were often mistaken, one for the other, even by intimate friends. It must have been him who, seduced by offers of reward, assisted William in his monstrous task. His career of dissipation and debauchery well fitted him for the commission of crime, however atrocious. It would not be singular should you mistake his face for mine, by the momentary light in which it was seen."

Henry D'Arcourt, convinced of his brother's innocence, caught him to his breast in a fraternal embrace; the stern man shed tears of joy. For some moments the brothers remained locked in each other's arms, without speaking, for the joy of both was too deep to admit of utterance; the younger had found a brother, whom, for upward of twenty years, he had mourned as dead; the elder had one returned to him, guiltless, whom, for the same length of time, he had accused of a horrible crime. At length, gently freeing himself from the arms of his brother, Henry D'Arcourt said:

"Charles, I now firmly believe all you have asserted, and most fervently do entreat your pardon for having heretofore so cruelly wronged you. God alone knows how bitterly I have suffered during those long and weary years, under the belief that both my brothers sought my life; and He alone can tell how deeply grateful I am to find the youngest, and most dearly cherished, innocent of the crime I imputed to both. But, enough of this now. At some future period, a

more fitting opportunity will occur for explanations; for the present, our time is limited, and I must hasten in disclosing to you the business that brought me here. Some ten days since I received private intelligence of your arrest, and hastened to the head-quarters of Cornwallis, upon whose friendship, in former years, I possessed some slight claim. Whatever may be the faults of this nobleman, I at least can not charge him with ingratitude, for he acknowledged my claim, and gave me an order for your release. This order I placed in Major Raynor's hands; but I have good reason to believe, should he consider it necessary to the advancement of his schemes, he will not hesitate to disobey it. To-morrow morning Raynor will demand from you the hand of your daughter, and will make your release conditional upon the granting of this demand. Should it be denied, I believe, upon my soul, he would not hesitate to hang you, as he has threatened. You must give your consent, yet so far reluctantly as not to raise suspicion in his mind—only delay the ceremony as long as possible. Although my plan to obtain your release under Cornwallis' order has failed, I have still one resource left, and this will not fail. Helen shall be saved, if my life is spared twenty hours, should I be compelled, single-handed, to rescue her from the altar. And now, my brother, I must leave you. I fear too much precious time has already been spent."

After an affectionate farewell, Henry D'Arcourt left the chamber. As his eye fell upon the slumbering sentinel, a smile crossed his stern features, at thought of the blissful unconsciousness of what was passing around him in which he lay.

"The potion has done its work well," he said, in an undertone. "I should not envy the poor fellow if his commander were to discover his present dereliction of duty. These things must not remain here, or they may serve to get my friend Cato into trouble."

Picking up the empty bottle and basket, he descended to the lower part of the house, and making his way to the kitchen, found the faithful Cato awaiting his return. Having given his sable assistant his full share of praise for the successful manner in which he had carried out his part of the undertaking, and strict instructions for the government of his future

conduct, Henry D'Arcourt next addressed himself to the most dangerous portion of his enterprise—passing the sentinels on the outside of the house. Extinguishing the light, he advanced to the outer door, and listened until he heard the sentinel pass. Bidding Cato lock the door as soon as he was on the outside, he cautiously opened it, and stepped into the deep embrasure without. The night was dark, and he paused within his cover and again listened intently. Hearing nothing, he at length ventured to step forth upon the gravel; but his foot had hardly touched the ground, when he was warned by the sharp click of a gun-lock, and the challenge:

“Who goes there?”—that the sentinel was standing within a few paces of him. All further chance of concealment was now at an end, and he bounded forward, trusting to the darkness to shield him; but, his foot alighting on a rolling stone, he fell prostrate. The accident probably saved his life; for, as he fell, the ball from the sentinel's gun whistled over him. Before he could recover his feet, the soldier was upon him, but one blow from his powerful arm stretched the man senseless, and again he dashed forward in the darkness, followed by random shots from the other sentinels.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALL FOR A HORSE.

As soon as Henry D'Arcourt had succeeded in reaching the woods, feeling himself secure from pursuit, he paused, both to regain his breath, and to try and discover his exact position, in order to regulate his future course. On the preceding day he had dismounted about a mile from the house, and fastened his horse in the woods at some little distance from the road. This he had done, not so much from any suspicion of the reception he should meet with, or any idea of the failure of his mission, as from an innate caution in his character, that led him never to neglect precautionary measures. He now congratulated himself upon his foresight, as it had enabled him,

without suspicion, to secrete himself in the house, and fully discover the schemes of Major Raynor.

In the daytime, or even on an ordinarily dark night, he could have gone, without hesitation, to the spot where he had left his horse; but the Egyptian blackness prevailing about him now, served to confuse him, and after a few vain attempts to discover his exact locality, he was forced to the conclusion that any further efforts to find his horse, until it should be lighter, would prove worse than fruitless, for he might easily get so far out of his way, as to lose more time than he would chance to gain. The delay was disagreeable, for he had expected to have been in Marion's camp before day; but Henry D'Arcourt was not one to expend vain lamentations upon the inevitable, so he quietly seated himself at the foot of a tree, and patiently awaited the coming light.

With the first break of day he was again upon his feet, and proceeded to the place where his horse was fastened; but here a new and more terrible disappointment awaited him, for the steed was gone. The strong man seemed almost stunned as all the consequences of this disaster flashed through his mind. His situation was seemingly a desperate one. Fifteen miles of hard travel ahead of him, in his present state of fatigue, limited to a time in which he could not do much more than accomplish his purpose, even when well mounted, the fate of those whom he loved so dearly depending on his speed. No wonder that he for a moment bowed beneath this blow; but his natural stern determination and vigor of mind returned to him, and casting off the cares that oppressed him, he commenced a careful examination of the spot. He was not long in convincing himself that the animal had not been removed, but had broken the rein by which it was fastened, and strayed off somewhere in search of food. The ground was soft and damp around the place, and he easily tracked the horse, which had evidently taken the same road he himself was compelled to travel. He hurried forward in hopes of overtaking the animal; but mile after mile was passed over, and still he was disappointed. At last, overcome with fatigue, he felt compelled to rest, and seated himself a little way from the roadside.

He had rested but a few moments, when he heard the sound

of horse's hoofs on the road ahead of him. Springing up, he looked eagerly forward, hoping he had at length found his truant steed; but he was again disappointed. A traveler was approaching at a slow pace, mounted on a splendid horse, but not the one for which he was in search. Drawing himself behind the trunk of a tree, Henry D'Arcourt carefully scrutinized the stranger, which he had ample time to do at the moderate pace at which he was moving.

He was a man of six feet and at least three inches in height, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, long-necked and long-limbed; his manner was slouching and ungainly, and there was an indescribable air of looseness in his general make-up that might almost lead a beholder to suppose that he had been put together in a hurry, on contract. His clothing was coarse, much worn, and several sizes too small for him. He was apparently unarmed, except that the holsters at his saddle-bow might contain pistols. The animal he rode was a very fine one, and Henry D'Arcourt determined he would have him, by fair means, if possible, if not he would take him by force; for, with so much depending upon him, he felt that, if necessary, he could even commit an act that, under ordinary circumstances, his noble nature would recoil from. As the singular looking traveler approached, Mr. D'Arcourt stepped from behind the tree into the road. The former reined up his steed suddenly, and as his hand fell upon the pistol holsters, he said,

"Hello, stranger! where on airth did yeou drop from? Yeou mought as well kill a feller at once, as scare him to death in that way!"

Mr. D'Arcourt could not restrain a smile at the singularity of the address, and as he gazed into the quaint but fearless face, he could not help thinking he had never seen one that expressed less likelihood of such a fate overtaking its possessor. Assuming a conciliatory air and tone, he said,

"My friend, I beg your pardon if my abrupt appearance startled you; I am in trouble."

"Dew tell," answered the other, whom the reader has recognized as our old friend Ephraim. "Well, neow, that's bad! Tell us about it, squire; I've known heaps of trouble myself. When Jerusha Ann Slytes sacked me—"

"My friend," interrupted D'Arcourt, impatiently, "I wish to purchase your horse."

"Jerusalem!" responded Ephraim. "Well, he's a purty good sort of critter, and I know lots would like to buy him; but the fact is, squire, I ain't egzactly on the trade, to-day."

"I will give you fifty pounds for him," said Mr. D'Arcourt.

"Can't say but that's a good price, squire," rejoined Ephraim; "but, you see, I can't ride fifty pounds. Now, if you'd another horse, I'd swap with you for boot; but money ain't no object when a man's in a hurry."

"Fix your own price upon the animal and I will pay it," replied the deeply anxious gentleman.

"Well, that's liberal, squire; but the fact is, this ere critter don't belong to me," answered Ephraim.

"Look here, my friend," said Mr. D'Arcourt, gravely, "I wish you would fix a price upon this horse, and let me have him quietly, for I tell you plainly, have him I must."

"Yeou don't say so!" replied Ephraim, allowing his hand again to rest on the holster. "Well, if you must, squire, I suppose you must; but I don't egzactly see how the thing's to be did, so long as I'm a-top of the critter."

Mr. D'Arcourt saw that a crisis was approaching. Any further attempt to purchase the animal he knew would be useless. In the contest that was about to ensue, he wished to avoid the use of weapons on either side, for he did not desire to hurt the stranger, and was equally far from desiring to be wounded himself. He was, therefore, determined that the struggle should be carried on with such weapons as nature had provided them, trusting to his own wonderful muscular power for a successful issue. With a bound he alighted by the side of the horseman, struck his hand from the holster with one of his own, and grasping his collar with the other, by an almost superhuman exertion of strength, dragged him from the saddle to the ground; but he found that he had underrated the physical force of that ungainly form; and when he felt the gigantic and crushing embrace of those long arms, he began to fear that he had overrated his own powers. Side by side they fell to the ground, and then began a fearful struggle. It is impossible to tell how it might have terminated; but the

quick clattering of a horse's hoofs was heard close beside them, and instantly a shout, in a voice which both recognized.

"Hold! Ephraim! How is this? My father!" caused them to release their hold of each other and spring to their feet. The horseman dismounted hastily, and advanced toward them, the intense surprise he felt at the scene vividly depicted in his countenance. Ephraim gazed at first on one and then the other in blank amazement; but, recovering himself, and drawing a deep breath, he slowly ejaculated,

"Je-ru-sa-lem!" Then addressing the elder, he said, "Look a-here, squire, why in thunderation didn't you tell me you was the capting's dad? You might have had the critter without paying me a penny."

Every thing was soon explained, and in so doing Mr. D'Arcourt caused the young man much happiness by recalling his former injunction against further intimacy with the family.

Ernest, on his part, explained the presence of Ephraim and himself, by stating that they were on a scout to try and obtain information in regard to Raynor's movements, of whose presence in the neighborhood they had been made aware.

Mr. D'Arcourt did not forget to make a courteous apology to Ephraim for his attempt to dispossess him of his horse, which the latter received laughingly, saying,

"It was a good thing the capting came up, or I guess somebody would have been hurt."

Henry D'Arcourt could not but entertain serious doubts in his own mind as to who the "somebody" might have been.

It was arranged that Ernest and his father should hasten to the camp—the latter on the disputed horse—and that Ephraim should remain behind and try and discover the missing steed, an accurate description of which was given him.

For some time after the departure of his late companions, Ephraim carefully searched for traces of the lost animal; but, at length, becoming tired of the apparently hopeless task, his adventurous disposition suggested the idea of attempting to discover what was going forward at the mansion of Mr. D'Arcourt. In this direction he accordingly started, and proceeded uninterruptedly, until within a little over a mile from the building, when sounds along the road behind and before him,

warned him to fly to "cover." Swinging himself up easily into a large tree, a portion of whose branches overhung the road, he was soon concealed amidst the foliage. Two horsemen were approaching, from different directions, dressed in the well-known British uniform, one of them leading a riderless horse, which, from the description he had received, Ephraim instantly recognized as the one for which he had been searching.

The men rode up, and met directly under the tree in which the partisan lay concealed.

"Well, misther sargent, what discoveries?" said one.

"We shall go back from the scout the major sent us on this morning, Pat," said the other, "just about as wise as we started. But you made a pretty good haul when you captured that horse—that is something."

"Troth, but he's a jewel of a baste, any how," replied the other, whose brogue readily revealed his nativity. "It's sorry its owner will be for the loss of him."

"Perhaps it was his owner that caused the row at the house last night," rejoined the first speaker. "If so, he will not be likely to come after us to get back his animal."

"Howly St. Patrick!" exclaimed Pat; "what a row it was to be sure! I thought that all those divils, with the ould divil Marion himself, at their head, were on us again."

"Don't worry about that, Pat!" answered his companion; "the infernal rebel and all his blackguard crew are more than a hundred miles away, now."

"But, I say, Pat," continued the soldier; "you stay here, while I take a look down this path that leads to the right. After that we will return and make our report to the major."

So speaking he rode off in the direction indicated.

He had been gone but a few minutes, when Pat's attention was attracted by a slight rustling above him, and he had barely time to turn his head, when something dropped from the tree, upon his horse, behind him, and his arms were pinioned to his side with a force that was actually painful. So quietly and easily had the whole movement been performed, that the horses were scarcely startled.

"Howly Vargin Mary!" howled the terrified dragoon. "Howly Moses! Howly Saint Patrick, and all the other blessed saints, save me from the divil and all his angels!"

"Neow look a 'ere, Britisher," said a voice in his ear, "yeou just keep a civil tongue in your head, and don't call gentlemen from reound Bosting devils and angels, or you'll get yourself into trouble. Don't squall quite so loud, nuther, or the lady and all the gentlemen you've been yelling at won't prevent me from wringing your neck."

While he was speaking, Ephraim was busy unfastening a rope from the saddle with one hand, easily holding the trooper with the other. He then drew the arms behind the back and bound them. Possessing himself of all the weapons of his prisoner, he now mounted the other horse, holding on to the rein of the one on which the soldier was seated.

"Neow, Britisher," he said, "we're going to do some tall riding. I haven't tied you on the critter, 'cos I guess you'll stick without it, and I haven't stopped your mouth, 'cos I want you to talk; but if you try to get off, or squall, or cut up any other shine, I'll blow your brains out, sure's my name's Ephraim."

The soldier had partially recovered from his first terror, and finding himself completely at the mercy of his captor, he took the wisest course, and strictly obeyed the commands he received.

After two hours hard riding, Ephraim entered the camp in triumph with his prisoner and the captured horse, and received high praise for his daring and successful feat.

CHAPTER IX.

THE APPARITION.

ABOUT eight o'clock in the evening, four persons were seated in the brightly illuminated drawing-room of Mr. D'Arcourt's mansion. Mr. D'Arcourt—whose face, despite his efforts to the contrary, displayed some of the nervous anxiety that was beginning to fill his mind—Major Raynor, whose manner evinced a degree of impatience unusual to it; a young man in a lieutenant's uniform, the only commissioned officer who

accompanied Raynor on his present expedition ; and, lastly, the clergyman who was to officiate upon the occasion.

It was already two hours past the time that Major Raynor had fixed, on the preceding evening, for the ceremony ; but the clergyman had been delayed, and, although it was now more than an hour since word had been sent to Helen that all awaited her presence, she had not yet made her appearance.

A terrible storm was raging without ; the rain fell in torrents, the fierce gusts of wind caused the house to rock on its foundations ; the bright glare of the vivid lightning, as it vanished, would leave the brilliantly-lighted room in almost total darkness, and the crashing thunder seemed to reverberate from the inmost recesses of the earth. It was such a night as the boldest traveler might well dread to encounter, and, as Mr. D'Arcourt listened to the terrific war of the elements, his heart sank within him, and he felt that all hope of the promised aid was at an end. His life of ease, quiet and luxury had ill-adapted him to judge of the movements of men to whose hardihood sunshine and tempest were alike.

Raynor's impatience was momentarily increasing. At length, glancing at his watch, for perhaps the twentieth time, he arose, and crossing the room to where Mr. D'Arcourt was seated, said, in an undertone,

"Miss D'Arcourt's delay is unaccountable, sir."

"Shall I go and see what it means ?" asked the gentleman, endeavoring to render his voice steady.

"Pardon me, Mr. D'Arcourt," replied Raynor, "you must remember you are not yet fully at liberty. I will send and inquire." Turning to the young officer, he said, "Lyle, oblige me by sending a servant to Miss D'Arcourt's chamber, to inform her that we have been awaiting her presence for more than an hour, and if she is not coming I desire her to send word to that effect, as I may have other business before me to-night."

Raynor well knew that Helen would understand the implied threat. The young officer left the room, but returned in a few minutes with Helen's reply that she would be down soon. Fifteen minutes more elapsed, and then she made her appearance.

Mr. D'Arcourt hastened forward to meet her as she entered

the room. A fearful change had come over her since he had last seen her. All hope had now utterly forsaken her mind. Pale, cold and impassive as monumental marble, every expression but one of blank despair was banished from her face. As her father took the cold hand, and bent to kiss the white brow, he hastily whispered :

"Helen, this shall not be ! I will now publicly protest against the marriage, and the villain may do his worst."

"Father," she replied, in a low but unwavering voice, "if you love your daughter, I implore you to remain silent. I am now in the hands of God ; let Him do with me as He will ;" and once more kissing him she advanced quietly into the room, and placing her hand in the offered one of Raynor, passively allowed him to lead her before the clergyman, who had taken his position, with his back near the door of the small apartment adjoining.

The young officer placed himself at the right hand of Raynor, and Mr. D'Arcourt mechanically kept by his daughter's side. The clergyman opened the book, and the solemn ceremony commenced.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God—"

A blinding flash and deafening peal interrupted the speaker. The form of the young lieutenant seemed encircled by fire as it dropped to the floor—a dense smoke filled the room, and for a moment all was still ! Then confusion ensued. The clergyman fell upon his knees in prayer, Mr. D'Arcourt frantically caught his daughter in his arms ; she, poor child, remained impassive as before, for the bolts of heaven had no terror for her. Raynor, calm and collected as always in moments of danger and death, bent over the body of his subordinate, and perceiving life to be extinct, raised it in his powerful arms and bore it from the room. He soon returned, and his voice, clear and cold as ever, broke the solemn stillness that succeeded his departure.

"My brother soldier," he said, "is past human aid. Let the ceremony proceed."

"My God, Major Raynor, you can not mean it !" cried Mr. D'Arcourt. "It shall not be, sir," he added, passionately.

The clergyman also interfered, and begged that the

ceremony might be postponed. Raynor listened patiently till both had finished, then he said :

"Reverend sir, this part of the affair does not concern you. Mr. D'Arcourt, I shall attempt no compulsion ; the whole matter rests with your daughter—it is with her to decide."

Helen well understood his meaning, and turning to her father, said :

"Father, I entreat you to be silent ; it must be as Major Raynor says. Sir," to the clergyman, "the ceremony must proceed."

Once more, but with a tremulous voice, the clergyman commenced the service, and proceeded uninterruptedly to the demand :

" ' If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace. ' "

"That can I," answered a commanding voice.

The door behind the holy man was flung open, and the noble form of Henry D'Arcourt strode into the room. He addressed each of its occupants in turn.

"Sir, by your leave," he said to the clergyman, closing the book in his hands. "Charles, I am here. Helen, my child, I have kept my word. Major Raynor," bending a stern look upon the soldier, "what means this disobedience to the imperative orders I placed in your hands yesterday?"

Each person in the room expressed the emotion felt, at his sudden appearance, in a different but characteristic manner. The clergyman's face wore a look of intense surprise, yet, withal, he was pleased to have a disagreeable task taken thus completely out of his hands. Helen, with a cry of joy, flung herself into her father's arms, and he folded his child to his breast, with the devout exclamation :

"Thank God!"

At the unexpected response, the countenance of Major Raynor plainly evinced his astonishment at the interruption. As the intruder entered the apartment, the officer recognized him, and felt that his scheme was foiled. When Henry D'Arcourt ceased speaking, with a face livid with passion Raynor strode toward him, and fiercely demanded, as he half unsheathed his sword :

"What means this insolent intrusion? By what right, sir, do you presume to interfere here?"

Calmly Mr. D'Arcourt met the fierce wrath of the soldier, and in a stern voice replied,

"By the right, sir, afforded me by the pass from Lord Cornwallis, which you have already seen. By the right of force, which gives the stronger power over the weaker—a right you yourself have heretofore exercised. By the right of an uncle to this girl—her father's elder brother, and the rightful possessor of the miserable property for which you were willing to barter your soul. And, sir, if these do not satisfy you, by another, that even your haughty and rebellious spirit will scarcely dispute—the right of—"

The speech of Henry D'Arcourt was brought to an abrupt termination. So engrossed were the occupants of the room with the scene before them, that no one had noticed the opening of the door, nor the noiseless entrance of the female figure that glided in. Clad in long white garments, that hung loosely about the emaciated form, the unconfined hair falling in wavy masses below the waist, the pallid but beautiful face, the wild light in the large hazel eyes—its appearance might have proclaimed it a being from another world. The spiritual-looking visitant gazed around the room with a bewildered air, until her glance fell upon the form of Raynor; the look of uncertainty passed from the face, replaced by one of joyous recognition, and she threw herself upon his breast, clasping him in a close embrace.

"Henry! my husband!" she cried, in thrilling tones. "Have you at last returned to me? My God, I fervently thank thee!"

"Oh, God!" burst from the bloodless lips of the conscience-stricken man, as he staggered against the wall for support, "has my sin at length found me?"

A solemn silence pervaded the room that no one cared to be the first to break. Raynor seemed to lose all consciousness of the presence of others, as he gazed into the upturned face, nestling upon his breast, and as he met the eyes beaming with love and happiness, a softer look illuminated his own, while an expression of ineffable sorrow and pity crept gradually over his stern and haughty countenance. Letting his hand

fall lightly upon the tangled masses of rich brown hair, he murmured gently :

“Edith ! Edith ! is it indeed so ? Has my cruelty brought you to this ?”

Who shall say that, had his present mood remained undisturbed for even a few minutes longer, while the iron of his nature was softened and rendered pliable, the whole after-career of the man might not have been changed ? But a sound in the room caused him to raise his eyes, and as they encountered the scene presented to their view, he awoke to a sense of his present position, and aroused all the man, soldier and demon in his nature. Standing within the room he beheld the forms of Marion and his young captain, while those of several others, without the open door, could be plainly discerned ; and it needed not words to tell him that his men had been surprised and captured without a blow, and that he was surrounded by the partisan band. Simultaneously to his ready mind came this knowledge and the determination of the course to pursue. With greater force than he was probably aware, he thrust aside the slight form clinging to him, quickly unbuckled his sword-belt, flung open the window beside him, and, with the sword and belt in his hand, sprung out upon the lawn. As he touched the ground, a man attempted to seize him ; but, bringing his sheathed sword down upon his head with a force that struck him to the earth, Raynor sped forward in the darkness, followed by the sound of many footsteps in pursuit. A flash of lightning revealed to him several horses fastened by the roadside. Unloosing the first he came to, he sprung into the saddle and dashed down the road. The men would have mounted and followed him, had not the voice of their commander forbade pursuit.

As Marion returned to the house, from which he had followed Major Raynor to the roadside, he found his eccentric follower, Ephraim, seated upon the grass under the window, rubbing his head assiduously. As his commander approached he exclaimed :

“Blazes ! I guess heads must be cheap where that fellow came from ! Gin’ral, who was the Britisher that came out of the window in such an all-fired hurry ?”

“Major Raynor,” replied Marion. “Did he hurt you ?”

"Slightually," returned Ephraim, laconically. "Gin'ral, what do they call that stuff they teach about stars?"

"What do you mean—astronomy?" inquired Marion.

"'Stronomy! that's it. If Major Raynor ever gets hard up, he might make a living by teaching 'stronomy; for he made me see more stars, this black night, than I'd seen all my life before."

Marion laughed, and passed into the house.

As he reëntered the room, a sad scene met his view. Stretched upon a sofa lay the dying form of Raynor's wife—she who before has been known as Mrs. Montague. The clergyman kneeled by her side in devout prayer; Helen, with a sisterly tenderness, was bathing the brow of the sufferer, while the others remained sad but inactive spectators of the mournful scene.

As soon as the unfortunate woman made her appearance, Helen knew the nurse must have fallen asleep, and the patient, in the vagaries of delirium, had arisen and strayed about the house, until attracted by the sounds in the drawing-room. When Raynor freed himself from her embrace, she fell to the floor, her head striking the carved foot of the sofa. Raynor did not even know, when he leaped from the window, that she had fallen; but it was decreed the unfortunate being should meet her death at the hand of him whom she had so dearly loved, and whose desertion had already caused her so much misery and distress. When Henry D'Arcourt raised her in his arms and laid her gently on the sofa, it was discovered that the blow, combined with the previous excitement, had proved too much for the already debilitated system to withstand, and it was evident that her last moment on earth was rapidly approaching.

After remaining in a species of lethargy for about half an hour, she unclosed her eyes and looked around, as if in search of some one. Helen knew she recognized her, from the gentle pressure that was given by the wasted hand she held—a slight gasp, a convulsive shudder passing through the emaciated frame, and the troubled spirit was at rest.

A stern sadness rested upon the face of Henry D'Arcourt, as he looked upon the now calmly beautiful countenance, and he murmured to himself:

"Lay not this sin also to his charge, oh God, for he meant it not."

No explanations were entered upon that night, for, notwithstanding the deep cause for thankfulness most of them had, the tragic event of the evening had cast a gloom upon the spirits of all. Marion and his men found comfortable quarters in the house and outhouses, and the remainder of the night passed in quiet.

CHAPTER X.

THE ROADSIDE ENCOUNTER.

WHILE Major Raynor dashed on in the darkness, his mind was a perfect volcano of fierce and bitter thought. All the softening influences that had gathered round his heart, as he held the fragile form of his wife, had passed away, and the sterner, fiercer, more deadly passions of his nature resumed their sway.

As he reflected upon the hopeless overthrow of his ambitious schemes, the unaccountable manner in which he had been deceived and overreached, his public conviction as a liar and intended felon, the surprise and capture of his men—all thoughts of pity or remorse were cast from his mind, and their place supplied by wrath, and a determination of deadly vengeance upon the D'Arcourt family.

The storm had long since ceased, and the stars were struggling to break through the masses of cloud that still darkened the sky. About ten miles from the mansion some obstruction in the road caused the horse to fall, and its rider was thrown to the ground. Before he could regain his feet, four figures started up by the roadside, precipitated themselves upon him, and, despite his desperate struggles, he was overpowered, gagged, and his hands securely bound.

Raynor at first imagined that he had been captured by some of the detested partisan band, but was quickly undeceived in this, for, by the conversation that ensued, he discovered that he

was in the power of one of those desperate gangs of marauders, who, under the name of loyalists, infected the country, perpetrating every conceivable species of atrocity and crime.

Raynor's mind was far from being reassured as to his ultimate fate by the discovery he made; for, although nominally in the service of the king, he well knew the desperadoes were never particularly nice in their distinctions, but regarded every thing game that came to their nets. Robbery, pillage and murder were the true objects of these combinations, and Raynor felt fully assured that they would as little regard the person of a British officer as the life of a rebel, and doubted not that, without compunction, they would deliberately murder him for the sake of his watch and money.

Another man now joined them, who seemed to exercise some authority over the others, for they listened with a certain degree of respect to his suggestions. From the conversation that ensued, Raynor learned that he was evidently mistaken for some one else, and that his horse had been thrown to the ground by means of a rope stretched across the road; but who he was supposed to be, he did not learn, nor did he care to know, for at this moment the voice of the new-comer, which heretofore he had but indistinctly heard, broke familiarly on his ear, carrying his mind back to scenes long since passed, in another hemisphere.

Peering forward into the darkness, Raynor endeavored to gain a view of the speaker, but this he found to be impossible; yet he felt confident he could not be mistaken in the voice, and, succeeding in freeing himself from the gag, which had been but carelessly put into his mouth, he bent forward and whispered:

"Gregory Marland!"

The other gave a start of surprise, and ejaculated, but in a subdued voice, that did not reach the ears of his companions:

"Ha! who speaks that name?"

"Have you forgotten Henry Raynor?" inquired the officer, in the same tone.

"Is it indeed so?" questioned the man. "But hush! Not a word of that name here." Then, turning to his comrades, he elevated his voice, and said: "How is this, mates? What

blunder have you made here? This is not the man we wanted, but an old friend of mine."

The others crowded around him with ejaculations of surprise; but directly one of them, who evidently imagined an attempt to dupe them, on the part of their companion, said, in an incredulous and slightly ironical tone:

"Look here, Jim Scott! that cock won't fight! We aren't a-going to catch birds for your private plucking and eating!"

The one familiarly addressed as "Jim Scott" shortly answered:

"You can satisfy yourselves easily. Strike a light."

The order was quickly obeyed, and for the first time a view was obtained by Raynor of his captors, and by them of their prisoner. The astonishment that was depicted on the rough faces of the men corroborated the assertion of their leader, that they had been mistaken. Oaths and curses announced their disappointment; but, during a moment of silence, the same man who had before spoken, said,

"Sure enough this aren't the bird we intended to net, mates, but it may be worth picking."

"I told you he was a friend of mine," said the leader, fiercely.

"We don't know no such things as friends when we're doing business," replied the other.

Here Raynor thought it was time for him to interfere; he therefore said, calmly,

"My men, I have not much money with me—a matter of thirty pounds, I believe—but if you will unbind my hands I will gladly give it to you, to obtain means wherewith to drink the king's health."

This well-timed liberality, added to whatever influence their leader possessed over them, had its effect upon the men, and their prisoner was unbound, and assured that he should not be further molested.

After a short consultation between the men and their leader, the substance of which Raynor did not gather, the four departed quietly, leaving their companion alone with the English officer.

The former informed Raynor that he had a habitation in the woods near by, and invited him to accompany him thither,

to which he readily assented, for he had no desire immediately to separate from the man, whose services he had already determined to obtain. The loyalist started off into the forest, the officer following, leading the steed he had been permitted to retain.

They continued their silent course for upwards of a mile, until in the most dense and inaccessible part of the wood, they came to a house built of heavy palmetto logs, the solid construction of which might lead to the impression that it had been erected in former times, with a view to protection against Indians.

The man opened the door, and Raynor, having secured the animal he was leading, followed him into his dwelling. The former threw some dry pine knots upon the fire burning on the rude hearth, and soon a bright blaze illuminated the interior. Raynor gazed about him with an air of some curiosity; the apartment was a large one; the only furniture it contained consisted of a rough beadstead, a table, and three or four chairs, while some cooking utensils were scattered about. A ladder, in one corner of the room, leading up to a trap-door of rough-hewn plank, indicated that some sort of apartment existed above.

Having completed the survey, Raynor next turned his attention to the proprietor of this establishment, and for some moments the two men stood gazing at each other in silence.

The man was probably some fifteen years older than Raynor, although from his general appearance his age might have been much greater. Years passed in dissipation, debauchery and crime had left those indelible marks upon a once strikingly handsome countenance, that a life spent in the gratification of the brutal passions never fails eventually to affix upon the outward appearance; the bloated form, the unsteady limbs, the rough and discolored complexion, the wavering light in the bloodshot eyes, and the sensual expression of the mouth—all denoted plainly the past vicious career of the man.

As Raynor gazed upon him, his mind rapidly traveled back through a period of eight or ten years, when he last knew him, the gay, elegant, fastidious and accomplished gentleman, the delight of drawing-rooms, the reigning spirit at all convivial gatherings, whose face and form were models of

manly beauty, whose exquisite taste in dress was imitated by all fashionable gentlemen, and whose brilliant sayings, and sparkling repartee were quoted every where. To former association with this man—now ill-dressed and crime-marked, the companion of thieves, murderers and reprobates of the lowest order—Raynor was indebted for the developments of all those worse traits that stained his naturally great and noble character.

The officer was the first to break the silence, and his voice and words expressed the astonishment that filled his mind.

"How is this, Marland?" he said. "When I last left you, in your elegant apartments in Paris, I little thought our next meeting would be in the forests of the Carolinas, or that I should find you consorting with blackguards such as those we have just left, and the proprietor of a hovel like this."

A shadow of regret swept over the countenance of Marland at this allusion to the past, and he answered bitterly, but recklessly:

"The ups and downs of fortune, Henry, my boy. The dame keeps her wheel continually revolving, however, and if I can only stick to it long enough, I am sure to come to the top again. A run of bad luck rendered it advisable for me to absent myself from Europe for a season, and I concluded to try what a new country and a new life would do for me. It is true that my associates are not the most refined or aristocratic in the world; but they answer the purpose for which I use them. And this shanty, too, although scarcely equal to the apartments which I formerly occupied, serves to shelter me for a time. But come, draw a chair up to the fire; the nights are becoming chilly lately."

As Raynor was seating himself, in obedience to the invitation, his host, going to a sort of cupboard formed in an angle of the chimney, took therefrom a jug of spirits and a couple of horn drinking-cups, and drawing the table near his guest, placed them upon it, and seated himself upon the opposite side.

"Come, Henry," he said, "fill up and let us be merry. Putting the surroundings out of the question, this reminds me of old times. This," he added, pushing the jug toward his

companion, "is not quite equal to the old port and Burgundy we used to drink, but it will answer for want of better."

The excessive use of intoxicating drinks had never been among Raynor's failings, and, on the present occasion, the beverage offered him was not of a description to tempt him beyond the bounds of sobriety. Pouring a small quantity into the cup, and mixing it with water, he sipped a little, more for the appearance of companionship than from any pleasure it afforded his appetite.

His host, on the contrary, pouring out at least a half pint of the fiery liquor, drank it off, undiluted, at a draught, and immediately refilled the cup. For a time, as the two conversed upon times and scenes long since past, the potent spirits warmed Marland up to something of the old brilliant manner that Raynor so well remembered; but this stage of inebriation passed, the more brutal nature of the man began to exhibit itself in conversation.

"What ever became of the little girl you married in London, under the assumed name you sometimes used while we were in Paris together?" he suddenly inquired.

"She is dead," replied Raynor, shortly, little dreaming of the truth of his words.

He had determined, in his own mind, to make use of Marland in his projected schemes of vengeance against the D'Arcourt family, but he did not consider it necessary to explain to him the motives by which he was actuated, and he felt it would be far from safe to confide any further than could not be avoided in a man as totally unscrupulous as he knew him to be. He remembered the relation existing between Charles D'Arcourt and this man, and the bitter dislike the latter had always entertained toward the former, and he resolved that it would not be a difficult matter to mould Marland to the execution of his will. Suddenly breaking in upon the train of conversation they had been pursuing, he asked:

"Marland, would you do a service for me if you were well rewarded?"

"What do you call a good reward?" inquired the other, his sottish face lighting with a gleam of something like intelligence at mention of the word.

"A hundred pounds," replied Raynor, briefly.

"Henry, my dear boy," answered Marland, "for that sum I will do any thing you can ask of me—steal a maiden, burn a house, or cut a throat."

Raynor could not entirely conceal an expression of disgust that rose to his face at the ruffianly looks, words and manners of the scoundrel; but the latter failed to see the look, and the officer, quickly overcoming the transient emotion, inquired:

"How long have you been in this neighborhood?"

"But little over two weeks," replied Marland.

"Were you aware," questioned Raynor, slowly, and keeping his eyes fixed upon the face of his host, "that your cousin, Charles D'Arcourt, resided within ten miles of this place?"

The effect of these words upon the man appeared to be electrical. Bounding to his feet, with a horrible oath, his eyes literally glaring, he shouted:

"Charles D'Arcourt within ten miles of me? Baby Charles!—the puling scholar!—the whining preacher!—the canting hypocrite!"

"You do not love him, then?" inquired Raynor, somewhat fearing that he had permitted his companion a too free use of the spirits before he commenced his present conversation.

"*Love him!*" savagely repeated Marland. "Yes, love, as I should a snake, to crush it with my heel. Think you I can forget that he stole from me the affections of the only girl I ever loved? or that I do not remember the time when, driven to desperation with my embarrassments, I applied to him for aid, and he replied that he had no money to expend upon my vices, and delivered me a lecture as long as the moral law? No matter," he added, frowning darkly as he reseated himself, "I will have his life ere another sun shall set."

"No, you will not," replied Raynor, calmly.

"Why will I not?" asked Marland, fiercely.

"Because," quietly rejoined the officer, "I will show you how to obtain a better revenge, and one for which, in addition to the gratification it will afford to your own feelings, I will pay you well. No more of that," he added, authoritatively, as he placed his hand firmly upon the jug, toward which the

man had made another motion. "You have had more than enough liquor already. You will require the use of all the brains you still have left to fully understand the instructions I am about to give you."

Marland became indignant at this attempt to restrain his appetite, and would have tried forcibly to regain possession of the jug; but, in spite of himself, the quiet expression of determination in the cold, gray eyes, overawed him, and he felt himself in the presence of a master spirit, against which his own will was powerless to contend, and sullenly submitted to the decree. Raynor quietly removed the liquor from the table, and, placing it on the floor, close to his side, calmly continued the conversation.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VAGRANT.

THE next morning General Marion and the clergyman took their departure, the latter promising to return on the following day and officiate at the burial of Raynor's wife and the young officer.

Divining the unspoken wishes of Ernest, Marion gave him permission to remain a few days with his newly-found relatives, recommending him to retain Ephraim until his return to camp.

Charles D'Arcourt and his brother having much to talk over in private, upon Helen devolved the entertainment of her cousin. The task was not a difficult one, for they found many subjects of common interest upon which to converse.

Ernest, on his part, was more than ever charmed with his lovely cousin. Seated at the open window, the time passed unheeded by both, and the afternoon was rapidly waning, when a voice upon the lawn beneath them interrupted their conversation. Standing without they beheld a miserable-looking object, the form apparently bowed and decrepit, and

covered with the vilest rags. The face could not be distinctly seen, being shaded by a torn slouch hat; but, from the slight glimpse that could be obtained, it was far from pleasing.

This unprepossessing-looking figure, in a supplicating manner, and with the customary whine, entreated food and shelter for the night. No one was ever turned hungering from Mr. D'Arcourt's door, and Helen told him to go to the back of the house, and the servants should be ordered to provide for him. The man did not seem to hear her, and she repeated what she had before said in a louder tone; but still without success. Despairing of making him understand, she was about to call one of the servants to show him the way round, when Ernest saw Ephraim coming across the lawn. Calling to him, he bade him conduct the old man to the kitchen.

"All right, capting," responded Ephraim. "He's a darned purty-looking customer, any how." Then, addressing the object of the last remark, he said: "Come along, old feller. I'll show you the way."

But still the man moved not, and appeared unconscious that he had been addressed.

"He is deaf, Ephraim," said Ernest, from the window. "You must speak louder."

"Dew tell!" replied his follower. "Deaf is he? Well, I guess I'll make him hear, if he's any ears left," and approaching close to the old man, he elevated his stentorian voice to a pitch that caused Helen to put her hands to her ears, and shouted: "I say, old dad, come along with me."

This time he was evidently successful, for the man, mumbling something, started to follow him, but at such a remarkably slow pace that Ephraim again yelled in his ear:

"Why in thunder don't you walk faster? Lost your legs and ears too?"

The man again mumbled something, in which Ephraim thought he distinguished a familiar word, and again bawled out;

"Rheumatiz, is it? That's bad! My aunt, Matilda Jane, who lived in Bosting, suffered a heap from rheumatiz."

At this point they reached the kitchen door, before which Cato was standing.

"Look a-here, darkey," said Ephraim, "if you want to practice your lungs, to find out whether they're sound, here's your chance. I'm clean used up."

"Gorramighty, mass' Ephraim, what's dis?" ejaculated Cato, eyeing the wretched-looking object suspiciously.

"Can't say, egzactly," replied Ephraim; "but, as near as I can calkerlate, it's something like a man without tongue, legs or ears—leastways, those he's got aren't no 'count to him; for you can't understand what he says; he's bin a half an hour getting round the house; and as for ears—why, bless your soul, darkey! I'd rather winnow a hundred bushels of wheat by blowing at it, than to spend my wind trying to make him hear for an hour longer."

"Bress de Lord!" ejaculated Cato, rolling up the whites of his eyes.

"Fac', darkey; true, ev'ry word on't!" answered Ephraim. "But, if I were 'n your place, I'd take this old codger in and fodder him; that's what your missus meant that you should do."

Cato glanced equivocally at the dirty and ragged appearance of the man, and then replied:

"Dun no 'bout comin' into de kitchen, mass' Ephraim. Him scasely fit 'ciety for 'spectable brack people."

"Don't you be proud, darkey, if you are black," admonished Ephraim; "a white man's as good as a black man, if he only behaves himself—leastways they think so reound Bosting."

At this juncture another servant arrived, with a message from Helen, directing that the poor old man should be taken into the kitchen, and his wants attended to. There was no gainsaying this order, so Cato led the way, and was followed by the old man. Ephraim, also, accompanied them, remarking:

"Guess I'll go 'long tew, darkey. I feel a sort o' cur'osity to see if this queer old hoss takes kindly to his fodder."

A bountiful repast was spread before the beggar, and while he was eating Ephraim was attacked by the servants with questions as to the capture of the British soldiers on the previous evening. In his peculiar way, he entered on a full narrative of all the events with which he had been connected,

and particularly "the row" between himself and "Squire St. Leon," and the blow which he had received from Major Raynor.

"Darn his picter!" he added, "if I'd knowed the cuss had just killed his wife, I'd have shot him 'stead of tryin' to catch him. He's a purty feller, any how, to try and make a bigamy of hisself, by marryin' another gal while his lawful wife was alive. By the way, darkey," addressing Cato, "I rayther guess that your young missus and our captin' are getting sort o' soft on each other. It's mighty nice, their finding out they're own cousins on the dad's side."

He was suddenly interrupted in his remarks by a quick movement of the old beggar, that upset a water-jug standing at his elbow. The vessel was broken, and its contents spattered over Ephraim from head to foot.

"Je-ru-sa-lem!" ejaculated the latter. "What in thunder's the matter with the old feller neow? Guess he's got a flea on him, the way he jumps!"

The accident served to change the conversation, and Ephraim soon after left the kitchen.

About twelve o'clock that night, Henry D'Arcourt awoke, a feeling of suffocation oppressing him. Springing from his bed, he discovered that a dense smoke pervaded the room. Throwing on a portion of his clothing, he flung open the door leading into the hall, but was staggered for a moment as he met the blinding smoke and scorching heat that opposed him. Recovering himself, he forced his way through to the room of his son, which was next to his own. Waking him, he hastily communicated the startling intelligence that the building was on fire. Then, rapidly crossing the hall, he dashed into his brother's chamber, dragged the still-sleeping man from his bed, and shouted in his ear:

"Wake, Charles! For God's sake, wake! The house is in flames!"

On regaining consciousness, the first thought of the bewildered man was for his child.

"My daughter, Henry?" he cried, in agony. "Oh, God, where is my child?"

"I will see to her," replied his brother. "Hasten, Charles,

and save yourself. I will save her," and seeing his brother preparing to obey his commands, he left him, and sped on through the hall, to a passage that led to his niece's chamber.

This passage he found to be much freer from smoke than the main hall, and for the first time since he had awoke, the almost exhausted man drew a comparatively free breath. The door of Helen's chamber was open, and, as her uncle entered, one glance sufficed to show him that she was not in the room. Carefully examining it and the adjoining ones, he felt convinced that she had already escaped. He now turned his entire attention to his own position, which was becoming perilous in the extreme, and struggled back to the main hall; but, short as his absence had been, a fearful change had come over the scene, and one glimpse was sufficient to assure Henry D'Arcourt that any attempt to escape through the sea of flame that now roared and surged before him, and gain the stairway, would only result in a fearful death.

He was not a man to lose his presence of mind in the face of danger. Rapidly retreating from the horrors before him, he regained his niece's chamber. Closing the door, to shut out the flame and smoke that pursued him, he quickly dragged the heavy bedstead to a window that he flung open, and hastily but securely knotting together some of the bedclothes, and fastening them to one of the posts, he let himself through, and, after sliding to the extremity of his extempore rope, he dropped to the ground.

He had hardly touched the earth, when Charles D'Arcourt and Ernest rushed toward him, the former crying, in agonized tones:

"Oh! my God, Henry, why have you not brought me my child?"

"She must have already escaped!" replied his brother. "Her room was vacant. Is she not here?" he questioned, in surprise.

"No! no!" cried the grief-stricken man. "She must have fainted in some of the passages. Oh, my God, have mercy upon me! My child—my beautiful! my precious one!—would to God I might have died for thee!" and the miserable father sunk senseless to the ground.

Ernest D'Arcourt bounded forward, and would have reentered

the blazing structure, but the powerful grasp of his father detained him, as he sternly said:

"Hold, mad boy! What would you do? Had you a thousand lives they would all instantly be sacrificed in that fiery pile. I tell you the girl must have escaped."

Still Ernest struggled vainly to release himself. But, with a crash, the roof fell in, a massive column of flame shot into the air, the walls tottered and fell with a deafening din, and all that remained of the stately mansion was a confused mass of burning timber.

"God's will be done!" said Henry D'Arcourt, solemnly, as he released his hold upon his son. "I still firmly believe Helen is safe; but, if it prove to the contrary, we can none of us reproach ourselves with the thought that all was not done that lay in human power to save her."

The morning sun shone brightly upon the still smoldering ruins, and Henry D'Arcourt, with a sad and troubled look upon his face, gazed upon the mass of rubbish that, despite his first convictions, he could not do otherwise than believe covered the earthly remains of his lovely niece.

All search for her had proved fruitless, and the sad conviction had gradually forced itself upon his mind that her father's words were, indeed, true; and that, in attempting to escape, she had fainted in some of the passages, and so perished.

Beside Helen, Ephraim and the old beggar were missing. The servants had all, fortunately, escaped, and were even now scouring the woods in the vain hope that some intelligence might still be gained of their missing mistress.

Henry D'Arcourt was aroused from his gloomy abstraction, by the sound of footsteps, and looking round saw his brother leaning heavily upon the arm of Ernest, slowly approaching. Years, instead of hours of suffering, appeared to have been added to the life of Charles D'Arcourt. The countenance of the young man also expressed the intense grief that filled his soul at their common loss.

Hastening to meet them, Henry D'Arcourt affectionately placed his arm about his brother, and addressed him in a gentle, soothing voice:

"Charles, my brother, why do you come here. Try and rouse yourself to higher and nobler thoughts than those that at present fill your mind. Remember, my brother, those holy lessons of resignation to a Divine will, that, to another, you yourself would be the first to inculcate. If your darling be really taken from us, remember that it has been wisely ordained by a higher power, against whose decrees we must not rebel."

"Yeou don't say, squire? Darn'd if I don't smash him, if I get hold on him, though," was the startling and irreverent interruption, and Ephraim, looking worn and travel-stained, but unscathed by flame, stood before the amazed group.

Before any of them could recover from the astonishment with which his sudden appearance had overwhelmed them, sufficiently to speak, Ephraim addressed Ernest with :

"Capting, are the hosses burnt up? 'Cos if they ain't I guess we'd better be trav'lin' like all possessed."

A wild hope shot into the mind of Ernest, for he, far better than either of the others, understood the character of his eccentric subordinate.

"What mean you, Ephraim? Where do you come from?" he hastily inquired.

"Look a-here, capting!" replied Ephraim, "if you're going to ax questions, better do it in the saddle. Your cousin, the gal you're looking for, is ten miles from here, in the hands of a couple of as dirty-looking rascals as you ever saw."

No more was needed. The reaction in the heart of Charles D'Arcourt was almost overpowering, when he heard his child was still alive; but the idea that she was yet in danger served to arouse him, and awaken within him all the energies that but a short time before appeared dead.

No further explanation was asked from Ephraim, for all of them appeared to appreciate the necessity there existed for haste on their parts.

None of the outbuildings had been burned, therefore the horses were all safe. Four of the best of these were speedily saddled, and the two brothers, Ernest and the faithful Ephraim, being well armed with weapons obtained in the building occupied by the British troopers, mounted and set off at full speed, under the guidance of the latter.

When they were fairly upon the road, Ephraim related to his captain, who rode by his side, his adventures on the preceding night.

Shortly before the alarm had been given by Henry D'Arcourt, some noise about the house had disturbed Ephraim, who occupied a small room on the ground floor. Soon afterward he distinctly heard the sound of steps upon the stairs, then through the hall, the front door cautiously unbolted and opened, and then closed.

His curiosity stimulated by these sounds, he immediately jumped from his bed, and looked out of the window. His astonishment was great when he discerned the figure of the old beggar, who the day before had appeared so feeble and decrepit, speeding across the lawn toward the woods, bearing some heavy burden in his arms. Instantly surmising that a robbery had been perpetrated, Ephraim determined to capture the miscreant, and rapidly getting into his clothes, he jumped through the window upon the lawn, and started in pursuit. In his haste he unfortunately forgot his arms, and even if he had thought of them it is doubtful if he would have considered it necessary to take them, as he possessed a somewhat exalted reliance upon his own physical powers.

Short as was the time he had spent in dressing, it gave the beggar so much the start that he entered the woods when Ephraim was only half-way to them. At this moment, the sky, which before had been clear and bright, became suddenly overcast, and an almost impenetrable darkness settled upon the earth.

As he rapidly approached the woods, a familiar sound struck upon his ear, that caused him to pause for a moment, and then to deviate from the course he had been pursuing, and at a much slower and more cautious pace than he had before been going, to enter the forest. The sound was nothing but the neigh of a horse, yet to Ephraim it implied danger, and awoke in him all the habits of caution that his life in Marion's band had engendered. Stealthily approaching the spot from which it had proceeded, he discovered two horsemen, and by the brief words that passed between them, he learned that the burden the man had borne from the house was Helen. At first he could not imagine what they were

waiting for ; but on this point he was quickly informed, by a reply of one of them to a remark of his companion, that it was time they were moving.

"In a few moments, Bill," he said ; "I just want to see the fire well started first. I lighted one in the drawing-room and another in the kitchen."

As Ephraim heard this, his mind became much troubled as to the proper course for him to pursue. At first he thought of boldly attacking the two fellows, trusting to their surprise for victory. But brave, even to rashness, as Ephraim was, he could not but perceive the recklessness of such a course, and the entire improbability of its successful issue. He was completely unarmed, and he doubted not that men on an expedition of this kind would be well provided with weapons.

His next thought was of starting for the house as rapidly as possible, alarming the inhabitants, arming himself and returning ; but as he glanced in that direction, a bright light gleamed from the lower windows, and the men immediately put their horses in motion.

Ephraim's mind was now fully made up. Much anxiety as he felt as to the fate of the inmates of the house, he reflected that where there were so many, some must surely awaken in time to warn the others of their danger. If he left the poor girl in the hands of her enemies, all traces to guide further pursuit would be lost. The innate chivalry of Ephraim's nature was aroused as he thought of her ultimate fate, and he made a solemn oath to himself that he would not desert her, and determined to follow the men, and trust to chance for some opportunity to rescue her. He knew, by a brief conversation between the men, the distance he should be compelled to travel, and also that he would not be hurried upon the road.

As the men left the cover of the forest, one of them observed :

"Come, Jim, let's hurry up now ; we've got ten miles to travel."

"Take it easy," was the reply. "The beasts are tired, and mine has a double burden to carry. Let them walk ; there is no danger of pursuit."

To the hardy frame of Ephraim, ten miles of a walk was

comparatively nothing. As he himself expressed it in his narrative to Ernest :

"It's only enough to give a feller a hankering arter his breakfast."

The clouds passed away, leaving the sky clear again, and Ephraim was easily enabled to keep the men in sight, without being himself observed, he keeping under cover of the forest which skirted the road the whole distance.

When the men reached the log-house, where the reader saw Raynor and Marland seated on the previous night, they dismounted, and one of them carried Helen into the building, while the other unharnessed the horses, fastened them to trees near the house, and also entered, taking the saddles with him. Ephraim took a position on the outside, where, through an open space between the logs, he could command a view of the interior. He could not see Helen, but learned where she was by the conversation he overheard.

"Where did you put the gal, Jim?" asked one of them.

"Overhead," replied the other; "she is safe enough there until she is wanted."

"How soon is the chap coming after her, and to pay us our money?" inquired the first speaker.

"Some time to-morrow, I suppose," answered the other.

No sooner had Ephraim heard these words, than his future course was determined on. He saw that no present harm was intended the girl, and that he should have plenty of time to procure aid.

Cautiously leaving his position by the house, he unfastened one of the horses, and led him until beyond hearing distance from the building. Then mounting him, he made all possible haste back over the road he had so lately traveled. While still over a mile from Mr. D'Arcourt's, the tired beast had given out, and Ephraim was compelled to take to his feet again.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FOREST CABIN.

Who can describe the feelings of Helen D'Arcourt when she found herself thrust into the garret, by the powerful arms of the villain who had borne her from her father's home. Every thing appeared like a confused and horrible dream to her bewildered mind, and it was long ere she could either realize her present fearful position or recall any of the terrible events that had immediately preceded it. But gradually they all came back to her, at first dim and vague, but at length horribly clear and distinct.

She remembered parting with her friends for the night, going to her chamber and seating herself. She knew she must have fallen asleep in her chair, for the next thing she could recollect was the horrible figure of the beggar bending over her. Before she could scream, he had bound a handkerchief firmly over her mouth, and then, snatching the covering from the bed, had enveloped her in its folds, and raised her in his arms.

Here her memory again deserted her, and all became indistinct until her arrival at the house.

By the rays of light from the fire below, that penetrated through the cracks in the flooring, she could make out the general appearance of her present place of confinement. In size it corresponded with the room beneath, occupying the whole interior length and breadth of the house. The floor was made of heavy, rough-hewn plank. There was no windows, the room being lighted by day through the chinks between the logs, from which the mud that originally filled them had fallen. In one corner of the apartment, a rude uninviting looking couch had been placed, and this, with one rickety chair, was all the furniture that could be seen.

Helen had a good opportunity to watch all that was passing in the room beneath, and after her feelings had become somewhat more calm, she endeavored to obtain from the conversation some clue to the cause of her abduction.

Two men were seated by the table, upon which was placed a jug of spirits and drinking cups, which they freely used. In one of the men Helen readily recognized the beggar; but the cringing manner and whining voice were gone, and were replaced by a swaggering air, and rough, insolent tones. The other was a short, thick-set, brutal-looking ruffian, who treated his companion with a certain degree of respect, notwithstanding his familiarity, as if in him he acknowledged a superior—a master-mind in villainy.

For a time little was said, but as the liquor began to take effect, their tongues became unloosed, and the terrified girl listened to a conversation such as had never before shocked her ear. Oaths and blasphemies were freely made use of, coarse jokes laughed over, and wild tales of hideous and atrocious crimes were discussed.

At first the elder, and evidently superior ruffian, had been peculiarly reticent in regard to all subjects relating to himself, or to the enterprise of the evening before, further than what his companion was necessarily acquainted with; but as the fumes of the powerful stimulant rose higher in his head, all caution was lost, and he commenced a wild and boastful history of his career, and, as he reviewed the past, a certain degree of dignity appeared in his manner, and a choicer selection of language was made use of, as if the subject upon which he was speaking recalled some of the refinements of earlier education.

Almost his first words exercised a terrible fascination upon Helen, and with a feeling of fearful interest she listened to a tale that, corroborated by some matters within her own knowledge, she was confident was true.

"Bill," commenced the man, "you would scarcely believe that Jim Scott, as he sits here now, clothed in rags—the loyalist, the desperado, the house-burner, the murderer—a terror throughout the Carolinas—was once a rich and prosperous gentleman, and, in another country and under another name, was the welcome associate of the richest and highest—his society sought by men, and his smiles anxiously coveted by the noblest and most beautiful women in the land. You would scarcely believe that the wealthy and proud Charles D'Arcourt, whose house I this night fired, and whose daughter

is now in the garret above us, is an own cousin of Jim Scott, the vagabond. Yet it is all true!

"My mother, who was a sister of Charles D'Arcourt's father, married a wealthy merchant of London. The haughty gentleman, proud of his knightly blood, became indignant at the *stain* cast upon his family by his sister's union with a *tradesman*, and refused ever after to recognize either her husband or herself. While I was very young, my mother died, and for some time after her death, my father, immersed in the cares of business, left me solely to the charge and companionship of servants.

"My father was an ambitious man, and, chafing under the scorn with which he had been treated by his arrogant brother-in-law, he determined that his son should be educated as a gentleman, and befitted to take a position in the society from which he himself had been excluded. He often spoke bitterly of the treatment he had received from one to whom he was so nearly allied, and thus, from my earliest childhood, a deep-seated hatred of the haughty D'Arcourt family was established in my heart.

"As soon as I was old enough I was sent to Eton, and here, for the first time, I met Charles D'Arcourt. The marvelous resemblance, in face and form, then existing between us, was a matter of wonder to all who saw us, until his claiming me as a cousin explained the apparent mystery. The hatred toward the whole family that had been fostered within me, now had an object upon which to vent itself, and was first shown in a boyish rivalry for academic honors.

"Charles D'Arcourt was a dull, plodding scholar, rarely mixing in the sports of his associates. For some time after the commencement of my school career, I applied myself diligently to my studies, determined to excel my detested cousin. My quick intellect gave me the advantage, and I was successful.

"Together we entered college, and here, at first, I pursued the same course as at Eton; but the life was fast becoming wearisome to me. My active temperament was ill-adapted to the heavy existence of a student, and feeling as if I had already accomplished enough to assert my supremacy in this line, I flung aside my books in disgust, and sought more

congenial pleasures and associates. My wild life soon brought down upon me censure from the college authorities. My cousin even had the audacity to remonstrate with me, upon the reckless course I was pursuing; but I fiercely bade the milk-sop attend to his own business. At length my career at Cambridge was summarily terminated by a disgraceful expulsion.

"My father's wrath, upon hearing of my expulsion, brought on a fit of apoplexy, of which he died. Now, master of what then appeared to me an inexhaustible fortune, I determined to enjoy life, and launched forth into every conceivable species of extravagance and dissipation. Not satisfied with my legitimate expenditures, such as wine, horses and hounds, I sought to get rid of some of my superfluous wealth at the gaming-table, and most admirably did I succeed! Ah! those were indeed glorious times, but soon ended.

"Within three years from my father's death, I was entirely ruined. Of all the noble fortune he had left me, not a penny remained. But still, for a long time, I managed to keep up my virtuous life, and retain the position I had gained in society. The experience I had obtained by my own ruin, admirably adapted me to the task of ruining others, and gaming, which I at first sought as a pleasure, I now adopted as a profession.

"During my embarrassments, I humbled my pride so far as to seek aid from my cousin, Charles D'Arcourt; but he upbraided me with my former life, cautiously entreating reformation, but wound up with a cold refusal, saying he had no money to expend on my vices.

"Before this, he had given me another and deeper cause for hatred. I had met one girl in society whom I loved with all the mad passion of my impetuous soul. I offered myself to her, and was rejected. Three months from that time she married my hated cousin. The girl above is the very image of her, and I detest her for that resemblance. I should have strangled her as she slept last night in her chair, had it not been for the reward promised me by Raynor."

The man paused for a moment to replenish his cup. Helen, as she heard the name of Raynor, instantly comprehended the cause of her abduction, and this knowledge, if possible, added

to her former terrors. But she still remained quiet, listening intently for further revelations. The man having again drained the cup, resumed his narrative, apparently entirely unconscious that his companion had dropped into a lethargic sleep:

"A glorious opportunity of vengeance upon the D'Arcourt family at length offered. Charles was the youngest of three brothers. The oldest, Henry, who had inherited the principal portion of his father's estate, I had never seen; but the acquaintance of the second, William, I made at the gaming-table, and gradually succeeded in worming myself into his confidence. He was a man of gloomy, morose disposition, but terribly addicted to gambling. I soon found that he was heavily involved pecuniarily, and upon this knowledge based my future actions. By well-timed hints and insinuations, his mind became easily prepared for the proposition that I at length boldly made—that, by the murder of his elder brother and his child, he should free himself of all his embarrassments. I offered to assist him in this work, and he, after some little hesitation, consented to my plans.

"William D'Arcourt immediately left London, on a visit to his brother's house, and I soon after followed him, and concealed myself in the neighborhood, awaiting a favorable opportunity to carry our plans into execution. One stormy evening we waylaid him on his own grounds, near the river. William was fearfully agitated, and I feared at one time would give up the attempt. As his brother approached us in the dark, however, he struck at him with the club; but his trembling hand misdirected the blow, and it scarcely touched the object at which it was aimed. At this moment a flash of lightning revealed our faces to the doomed man, and he seemed petrified. 'William! Charles!' he ejaculated; but my club descended upon his head, and it was all over. We flung the body into the rapid stream, whence it was taken weeks afterward. Notwithstanding the strictest search that could be instituted, we could not discover what ever became of the child. It was gone, however, and William D'Arcourt entered into quiet possession of the property.

"This property fell short of both our expectations, by some thirty thousand pounds. This sum, which was in the bank, William afterward found had been drawn out by the Earl of

Southdale, Henry D'Arcourt's brother-in-law, upon an order signed by the latter, and dated upon the same day with his death. At my instigation, William made some inquiries relative to the matter; but the nobleman received him coldly, and replied that it was a private transaction between Henry and himself, and he did not feel at liberty to make any further explanation, unless Mr. D'Arcourt wished to bring the matter before a legal tribunal, when more matters might possibly be made public than the latter would have wished. Something in the nobleman's manner awed William, and, in spite of my utmost endeavors, I could not persuade him to press the matter further.

"Notwithstanding this deficit, the fortune thus obtained proved very large, and for a year I reveled upon sums that I extorted from William D'Arcourt, but at the end of this time I was once more thrown upon my own resources, for the thought of his guilt so preyed upon the weak-minded man that it caused his death.

"For several years I continued to live in splendor, upon money obtained by gambling and other practices at which I had become an adept. On one of my European tours I became acquainted with Henry Raynor, then but a boy of eighteen or nineteen years of age, and was much struck by certain great characteristics that he even then displayed, and used my best endeavors to develop them. He married the daughter of a very wealthy merchant of London, under the assumed name of Henry Montague, which he had used while we were together in Paris. I was one of the witnesses at the wedding. He soon tired of his passion, but I was anxious to persuade him to make it public, wishing, through him, to control a portion of her father's vast wealth. Secret intelligence, however, reached me that the old man was on the verge of bankruptcy, and I now recommended Raynor to return to Paris and break off all further connection with the girl.

"Soon after my own affairs became involved again. Some gambling transactions more than ordinarily startling were made known to the public, and a mistake that I made in signing another man's name instead of my own, being discovered, I collected all the money I could lay my hands on, and sailed for Charleston. In the latter city I was robbed of every penny

I possessed by a rascal whom I was fool enough to think was my dupe, and since then I have been knocking about, picking up a living most any way.

"The best piece of luck that has befallen me lately, was the meeting with Raynor, and learning from him about Charles D'Arcourt. My revenge has been glorious—glorious; burnt in his house—daughter in Raynor's power—glorious! glorious! glo-ri-ous! glo—"

The man's head fell heavily forward upon the table, and he sunk into unconsciousness.

The morning was beginning to break when Helen D'Arcourt heard the last words. For a moment the idea of escape flashed through her mind, as she saw the state of perfect unconsciousness in which both her jailors lay; but one trial at the trap-door was sufficient to banish all such hopes from her mind. Going to the side of the rude couch, she knelt, and remained long in devout and earnest prayer. From her orisons she arose calmer and more hopeful, and in very weariness stretched herself upon the hard bed.

The sun was bright in the heavens before any motion was made in the lower room. The younger ruffian was the first to awake. On discovering the position of himself and his comrade, he gave a brutal laugh, and said:

"Well, here's a go, any how! Both drunk, hey? I wonder how much Jim swallowed after I went to sleep? It must have been an awful lot. Here, Jim!" he shouted, shaking his companion roughly, "wake up; it's noon already."

It took a good deal of shaking to arouse him, and when he at last raised his head, it was some time before he recovered full possession of his faculties.

"I wonder whether the prisoner is all right, Jim?" remarked the younger.

This brought the other hastily to his feet, and he started toward the ladder. But Helen, who had heard the remark, and did not wish the man to enter the garret, instantly replied:

"I am here."

"Oh, you are, are you, birdie? Well, so much the worse for you," called out the fellow, and they both laughed coarsely at the joke.

"Bill," added the man, "let us have an eye-opener, and then you must be off."

"All right, Jim," was the reply; "but don't you try to swindle me out of the ten pounds you promised me for last night's work."

"As soon as the fellow comes for the girl, you shall have it," replied the other, and after they had taken their morning draught, the one called Bill took a saddle and left the house, but quickly returned again, saying:

"Here's a pretty go, Jim! my horse has got loose, and has gone."

The intelligence was disagreeable, but there appeared to be no help for it; therefore, after a minute's conversation, the other replied:

"Well, you will have to take mine, then. I shall not want to use him before to-morrow night, any way, and by that time you will have returned. Try and steal yourself a horse in the mean time."

The man again took his departure, and his companion, after throwing wood upon the fire, began some rude preparations for breakfast. When these were completed, he ascended the ladder, and unfastening the trap-door, bade Helen come down. The poor girl would have much preferred remaining where she was; but knowing that refusal to obey his command would probably cause him to resort to force, she unwillingly complied, and descending the ladder, seated herself at the table.

It was useless for her to attempt to eat, however, and she felt, as she tried to swallow a morsel, as if it would choke her.

"It is not quite so nice as what your servants fed me on yesterday," said the man, jeeringly, as he noticed her repugnance to the food.

"It is good enough, but I can not eat," replied the poor girl, bursting into tears.

"Well, you need not, if you do not choose," answered the man, and then added, somewhat more kindly: "Draw your chair to the fire, if you like; perhaps you are cold."

Helen gladly took advantage of this permission, and drew her chair into the corner of the large chimney. Here she sat endeavoring to regain sufficient composure, to address the man

as she wished, in furtherance of a scheme to effect her release, that she had formed

"How much are you to receive for bringing me here?" she abruptly asked, steadying her voice as well as she was able.

The man started in surprise, and for a few moments eyed her curiously before he answered, but at last said :

"Well, I do not know whether it makes any great difference, if I tell you or not, and do not care, so I will for once answer you honestly ; I am to receive a hundred pounds."

"If you will take me back to my father in safety, he will give you one thousand pounds," replied Helen, still struggling to maintain her assumed composure.

"A likely story," said the ruffian, in a sneering tone. "And what besides would he give me, for having stolen his daughter?"

"I am in earnest in my offer," cried the girl, eagerly. "Take me back to my father, and I will pledge to you my word, that he shall give you the sum I have named, and allow you to depart in perfect safety."

"It is a large sum," said the man, reflectively, and Helen felt her pulse rising at his apparent hesitation ; but had she noticed the cruel mockery in his eye, she would have known he was but tantalizing her.

"I know it is a large sum," she cried ; "but no more than he is able and will be willing to pay for the restoration of his child."

The man fixed a look on her that froze the blood in her veins, as he slowly and savagely said :

"Helen D'Arcourt, if you could pave every step of the way between here and your home with coined gold, and offer it all to me, it would not set you at liberty ; I would not accept the offer."

"Man ! man !" cried the agonized girl, "what have I done to injure you, that you should seek to destroy me ? Have you no pity for the agony that you know I am suffering ? I entreat you to have mercy upon me ! By the memory of my mother, whom you once loved, I pray you to save me from the fearful fate to which you would doom me !"

"Ha !" shouted the ruffian, springing to his feet, and

approaching the terrified girl ; " how know you that I ever loved your mother ? "

" I overheard you say so last night," replied the trembling Helen.

" So I was talking over my cups last night, was I ? " said the man, slowly. " What else did I say, girl ? "

" You spoke of disliking my father," cried Helen, scarcely knowing, in her terror, how she did answer ; " but believe me, he will love you if you take back his child. "

" Did I speak of any other member of your family ? " he inquired, sternly.

Helen did not answer.

" Did I say any thing about your uncle, Henry ? " he once more inquired, with a fearful look on his face.

Still she could not reply ; not even to save her life would she tell a lie, and she feared to tell the truth ; but he read the answer from her silence, and seizing her fiercely by the arm with one hand, he snatched a long knife from the table with the other. A horrid light gleamed from his eyes as he hissed in her ear :

" Girl, you have heard too much, and must die ! "

" Oh, my God, save me ! " she shrieked, in agony.

" God ! God ! " mocked the impious wretch. " Call louder ; he does not hear you. "

The door was flung open, and three forms stood at the entrance.

" Foiled ! " shouted the villain, as he recognized Charles D'Arcourt in the foremost. " I must die, but it shall not be unrevenged ! Look, Charles D'Arcourt, upon the death of your daughter ! " and he raised the hand that grasped the knife high in the air ; but, ere it could descend, he released his hold of the girl and fell to the floor, as the report of a pistol from the side of the house was heard.

" Guess I fetched you that time, you darned old sneak," shouted Ephraim, triumphantly, as he peered through the crevice of the logs, where he had just fired.

Charles D'Arcourt sprang forward and caught his child in his arms, while his brother and Ernest rapidly followed him into the room. The joy that filled the hearts of all can be better imagined than described.

After a certain degree of composure had been regained, their attention was turned to the man upon the floor. He was mortally wounded, but still conscious. As Charles D'Arcourt gazed into his face, he recognized it, despite the great change that had come over it since it was last seen by him, and in surprise ejaculated :

"Gregory Marland !"

The rapidly-glazing eyes of the dying man wandered slowly and uncertainly over the group of faces bending above him, until they settled upon that of Henry D'Arcourt. The parting spirit appeared momentarily recalled to earth, the dim eyes glared with horror, and the lips feebly gasped :

"Have — the — dead — returned — to — torment — my — last — hour ?"

"Not so," answered the stern voice of Henry D'Arcourt. "If it be any consolation to your miserable soul to feel that you have one crime less to account for, know that your base attempt on my life failed."

Another feeble, but vain effort to speak, a horrid convulsion distorted the face, and the sin-polluted spirit of Gregory Marland had gone to judgment.

"And this is the end of the brilliant career once often predicted for the man !" mused Charles D'Arcourt, as he gazed upon the corpse. "The last act of a life of vice, an attempt to steal away my child, out of revenge for some fancied wrong I had done."

"Not so, my father," said Helen. "This man was but acting as a tool for Major Raynor, who is to return here to-morrow."

Charles D'Arcourt and his nephew both evinced the surprise they felt at her words. The elder brother said nothing, but a look of deep gloom settled upon his stern countenance. When all the others had left the room to hurry away from the detested place, he remained behind for a brief space. Taking a piece of paper from his pocket, he hastily wrote a few words, and then fastened it to the corpse. When this was done, he, too, slowly took his departure, carefully closing the door behind him.

Late in the afternoon, Major Raynor rode up to the house

He returned much sooner than he had anticipated, and the scowl upon his brow proved that all had not gone smoothly with him since his departure.

On his arrival in camp, he and his commanding officer had a terrible scene. The fiery Tarleton could ill brook the loss of his men, and he vented his rage freely upon Raynor.

He accused the latter of disobedience to his orders, and threatened him with a court-martial; but Raynor stoutly denied that he had ever received any orders, and Tarleton felt that there was no proof to be found to the contrary. So he contented himself with heaping abuse upon the head of his subordinate officer, to which, as may readily be conceived, the haughty spirit of the latter could ill submit.

Finally, after both of them had become somewhat more calm, Tarleton said:

"Major Raynor, I will acknowledge that I have not sufficient proof in my hands to warrant my bringing your conduct before a court-martial; but, at the same time, this does not alter my conviction in regard to the whole matter. Now, sir, after what has passed between us in the present interview, it will be disagreeable for me to be brought into daily contact with you, in the discharge of our duties, and I presume this feeling of mine is shared by yourself." Raynor bowed haughtily, and his leader continued: "I have a proposition to make to you, which I trust will prove an acceptable one. There is a friend of mine, at present with Lord Rawdon, of the same rank as your own, who is desirous of joining my command, and I think an exchange would meet the wishes of all parties concerned." Raynor again bowed. "It is necessary for me to send dispatches immediately to Lord Cornwallis, and it would be pleasing to me to have you consent to become the bearer of them. I shall grant you a sufficiently extended leave of absence to enable you to make all necessary arrangements toward effecting the exchange. Do these plans, sir, meet with your approbation?"

"Most fully, sir," answered Raynor, promptly. "Nothing at the present time can give me greater gratification than the prospect of an exchange that will remove me from the command of Colonel Tarleton!"

"It is well, sir," said the other. "Your desire to escape

from the command of Colonel Tarleton is no greater than is the desire of that individual to be quit of the services of Major Raynor. In an hour's time, sir, the dispatches of which I have spoken will be ready," and he bowed his subordinate out of his tent.

So Raynor, on his way to the head-quarters of Cornwallis, had now arrived, earlier than he had expected, at the hovel of Gregory Marland.

He dismounted, and securing his horse, impatiently flung open the door of the house. The sight that met his view caused even the iron-nerved soldier momentarily to start back. Stiff and stark in death, surrounded by a pool of his own gore, lay the rigid form of his late instrument in crime.

Recovering quickly from the effect of the first shock, upon seeing the ghastly object, Major Raynor entered the room, to make further investigations.

One hasty glance about the room was sufficient to assure him that he was the only living occupant of the house. The trap-door that led into the upper apartment stood open, and Raynor, ascending the ladder, examined the room; the rude couch bore the impress of a light form, a rich bed-covering lay upon the floor, and near the trap-door he picked up a lady's handkerchief, in one corner of which were wrought the initials "H. D'A." Raynor's quick perceptions read the story now, almost as accurately as if it had been in print before him.

With a muttered curse upon the failure of his well-laid scheme of vengeance, Raynor descended the ladder into the lower room, and approached the corpse of Marland. On the breast of the body he perceived a piece of paper. Taking it in his hand, he attempted to read, but the rapidly waning light in the house was insufficient. By the light outside, he read the following words:

"The vengeance of God may be long delayed, but it is inevitable. Let the sudden and violent death of this vile criminal serve as a warning to the one who was his employer in the commission of his last atrocious crime. Let this man now be made aware that the wife he had promised before God to love and protect, at last perished by his own hand, as he flung her clinging form from him. Let him know that, by his act

also, even her poor remains were denied the privilege of interment, being consumed in the conflagration lighted by the hand of the miscreant in his employ. Let him endeavor to repent, while time is still vouchsafed, nor stubbornly harden his heart until repentance shall be too late!"

For a moment Raynor staggered, as he read the words; then hastily unfastening his horse, he flung himself into the saddle, and spurred furiously forward in the gathering darkness.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BATTLE

ONE day, toward the close of the month of August, in the year 1781, Major Raynor was seated within his tent, in the camp of the British army, near Eutaw Springs, commanded by Colonel Stuart, who succeeded Lord Rawdon, on the departure of the latter for Europe.

Months have passed since the evening on which we last saw him; but neither time, disappointment nor passion have left any traces on the outward man. The same cold, haughty look sits upon the pale face; the same steely glitter emanates from the gray eye; the same unconquerable determination marks the finely-chiseled mouth, and the same calm, proud but polished manner exists now that was observable when he first entered Mr. D'Arcourt's drawing-room. Whatever internal convulsions may have shaken his soul, no outward change bore testimony to their existence.

Two letters lay on the table before him, and carelessly reaching out his hand, he took up the nearest, and somewhat curiously examined the superscription. It was in an unknown hand; the letter was from England—had been strangely delayed on the way, and was months in reaching its destination. After discovering all he could from the outside, he broke the seal slowly, and glanced at the contents; but the first words seemed to exercise a singular spell upon him, and in a moment all the former nonchalance of his manner disappeared. The

letter was written by the steward of the Earl of Southdale, and its contents were as follows :

"MY LORD : It is my painful duty to communicate to your lordship the late terrible events that have transpired here, by means of which your lordship has succeeded to the title and estate of your father, the late earl, and my good lord and master. Some short time since, your elder brother, while hunting, was thrown from his horse and instantly killed. The loss of his son produced such a terrible effect upon the before-enfeebled health of the earl, that he rapidly declined, and last night breathed his last. If your lordship will permit me, I would suggest that your immediate return to England was advisable.

"I have the honor to remain,

"Your lordship's humble servant,

"THOMAS SMITH."

As Raynor finished reading the letter, his feelings for a short time were somewhat variant. For his brother's death he cared but little, for no great love had ever existed between them, and of late years he had learned to regard the elder as merely a barrier between himself and the title and estates. But the death of the earl was a different matter, and as he thought of the kindness and affection that the old man had ever shown him, Raynor did, for a few minutes, sincerely regret his loss. These feelings were evanescent, however, and were succeeded by those of pride and gratified ambition, as he thought of the high and envied position to which he had attained. A proudly exultant light shone from his eyes, as he laid the letter down ; when his glance fell upon the second one, that lay hitherto neglected upon the table, and he for the first time saw the superscription. An unaccountable revulsion came over the feelings of Major Raynor, and a vague and nameless chill struck to his heart, as he recognized the handwriting for the same as that on the mysterious paper he had taken from the dead body of Marland.

For some time he gazed, apparently spell-bound, upon those bold, firm characters, as might be supposed to have done, in times of old, the Eastern potentate, who, reveling in the plenitude of his greatness and power, beheld the fatal writing on the wall.

At length he so far overcame the incomprehensible terror that was stealing over him, and benumbing his faculties, as to reach forward and take up the letter ; but the iron nerves

that had never before been known to falter, failed him on this occasion, and his hand trembled so violently that he could scarcely break the seal.

"Pshaw!" he ejaculated. "Have I become a child that I can not control myself, but am terrified by a letter?" and he tore it open.

An inclosure dropped to the ground, and as Raynor stooped to pick it up, the dread that filled his mind was increased when he saw the writing of the Earl of Southdale.

The writing of the inclosure, which he read first, was that of a dying man, and the feeble, trembling hand had rendered it almost illegible. It was addressed to "Henry St. Leon, Esq.," and was worded as follows:

"MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER: The hand of God is more powerful than the will of man, and the heretofore innocent deception that we have so long practiced upon the world, must at length cease, in order to prevent a terrible wrong being done to the true heir of my title and estates. My son was killed while hunting, some days since, and my own hour is near at hand. Even now my wavering sight and trembling hand warn me to hasten with what I have still to write. To you, my brother, must I commit the task of communicating to Henry the reasons for the deception that has been practiced. Since my son's death, I can not help feeling as if a great wrong had been done to Henry, whom I have ever regarded as a son, and to make him some slight reparation for my share in it, I have left him, by will, all of my property that is not strictly entailed. My sight fails me; the end is near at hand; in this world, my brother, forever farewell. SOUTHDALE."

With a kind of gasp, as if he were suffocating, Major Raynor took up the letter in which this was inclosed, and read the following:

"In compliance with the dying request contained in the letter from the earl of Southdale—which I inclose, so that no room for doubt as to the truth of my story may be left in your mind—I am compelled to undertake a task that your vices and crimes have rendered a painful one—the task of convincing you that you are my eldest son. I can not hope that any words of mine will soften your heart sufficiently to lead you to a different course of life for the future, but I can assure you that the heaviest grief of a long life of suffering endured by me, has been the knowledge of the utter unworthiness of a son who was capable of becoming all that was good, great and God-like in man. But enough of this; I know too well the stubborn spirit,

whether for good or evil, of the race from which you are descended, to entertain a hope of redeeming you from the career of sin that you have for years followed; therefore, let me address myself exclusively, and as briefly as possible, to the duty before me.

"You have doubtless heard that while still very young, I married the sister of the earl of Southdale, whose estates were contiguous to my own. You who have been known to the world as, and believed yourself to be, Henry Raynor, were the fruit of that union. While you were but two or three months old, your mother died, and I was left alone to rear the child committed to my charge. God forgive me, if to my neglect of that duty may be ascribed your after-course in life.

"When you were but little over a year old, I one day took you with me to the house of your uncle, as I had often been in the habit of doing. At this time the earl of Southdale was preparing for a long absence upon the continent, and intended starting on the ensuing day. His family consisted of his wife and one son, some three or four years older than yourself.

"About the time I thought of returning home, a furious storm set in, and my brother-in-law and his wife entreated me to remain during the night. This I could not do, as I had made an appointment with one of my tenants to meet me that evening on some business matter; but I gladly accepted their hospitality for yourself, promising to return early in the morning, before they should start, to take you home.

"On my way back I was waylaid and attacked by two men. A flash of lightning revealed their faces to me, and I recognized, as I supposed, my two brothers, William and Charles. Thank God, after years of suffering, I have discovered that I was deceived in regard to the latter, and that the man I mistook for him was no other than the vile tool you made use of in the abduction of your cousin Helen, Gregory Marland. This man, whom I had never before seen, at that time very closely resembled my brother Charles in appearance.

"Horried by the sight, I made no attempt at resistance, and fell under a blow from the hand of Marland. Supposing me to be dead, they flung my body into the river; but I had been only stunned, and the contact with the water revived me, and I succeeded in regaining the bank. For some time I remained seated there regardless of the storm that raged about me, endeavoring to recall my scattered senses, and here I formed the determination to which for twenty-five years I strictly adhered. Shocked at the dread perfidy of those nearest and dearest to me, I resolved to leave them to the enjoyment of their ill-gotten wealth, and the punishment of their own consciences, and become, myself, dead to the world.

"In furtherance of this scheme I made my way back to the mansion of my friend, and from my knowledge of it, succeeded

in gaining the room where he and his wife were seated, without being observed by any of the servants. Here I related my tale to the horror-stricken pair, and informed them of the determination I had formed. It was in vain that, by all the arguments in their power, they combated this resolution, as wild, wrong and chimerical; my mind was fully made up, and they finally, unconvinced, yielded to my obstinacy, and consented to assist me in my plans.

"Nothing that I could say would, however, convince either the earl or his wife of the guilt of my younger brother, who had always been a great favorite with both of them. They declared I had been mistaken in my recognition of him, and always entertained an entire conviction of his innocence. Their instincts led them nearer to the truth than did my own eyesight lead me.

"Our plans were soon formed. The storm had now passed over, and the countess, going to the nursery where you were sleeping, and telling the maid its father had concluded to return for it, the sleeping child was aroused and dressed, and the countess herself brought you into the room where her husband and myself were seated. After all the servants had retired for the night, I followed the earl to an unoccupied chamber, bearing your slumbering form in my arms.

"Early the next morning, every servant in the house, even to the countess' waiting-maid and the nurse-maid, were sent off to an estate belonging to my brother-in-law, somewhere in the north of England.

"I had a large sum of money deposited in bank, in a town some ten miles distant, awaiting a favorable opportunity for its investment. After the departure of the servants, the earl saddled a horse, and proceeding rapidly to the town, drew the money from the bank, on an order from myself dated the previous day. Some six months afterward, during a short visit that the earl made in England, William met him and made some inquiries relative to the money; but the answers he received from the nobleman tended to alarm his guilty mind, and no more was said about the matter.

"In this town the earl made arrangements for post-horses, being careful to select a driver that he supposed would be unacquainted with my person. In the evening we all set out for London. When we arrived the earl dispatched proper persons to take charge of his country mansion, and in the course of a few days, their preparations by that time being completed, he and his wife, taking you with them, started on their European tour. The countess did not return to England for six or seven years; her health being delicate, a residence in Italy was deemed advisable. When they finally returned to their native country you were always regarded as a second son, and until the earl's death no one but ourselves ever knew to the contrary.

"In the mean time, I embarked for the Carolinas, and when I arrived here, invested a considerable portion of the money in my possession in the purchase of a plantation, at no great distance from Charleston, and here commenced my life under the name of St. Leon. After I had become settled I began to think of making arrangements for having you with me again. But as soon as I mentioned the subject in a letter, both the earl and countess, who had become very fond of you, earnestly entreated that you might be permitted to remain with them, for a time, at least, and I finally consented, stipulating, however, that I should be permitted to make a handsome allowance out of the means left me, for your education.

"Tired, at length, of the solitary life I was leading, I contracted an alliance with the daughter of a neighboring planter, and in her found a loving, faithful and devoted wife. She died some three years since, leaving one son, whom you know under the name of Captain St. Leon.

"My duty is now accomplished, and I have nothing more to add, except that I shall ever pray most earnestly to God that you may yet see the error of your ways; but, until that time shall arrive, I sign myself, for the last, as well as the first time,

"Your father,

HENRY D'ARCOURT."

A terrible calm seemed to have settled upon the officer as he read the last word. All his late agitation had disappeared, and his usual cold, stern, haughty look and manner appeared to have returned with double intensity. He arose from his seat, deliberately procured a light, and, returning to the table, collected the three letters and placed them upon the ground; then, applying the flame to them, he watched the consuming paper until the last spark flickered and disappeared. Placing his foot upon the ashes, he said, in a voice strangely unnatural for even him in its calm and depth:

"Thus perish the last of my hopes, schemes and ambitions! Henceforth, Henry Raynor, without family and without friends, seeks only for a soldier's death and a nameless grave!"

On the morning of the eighth of September, Raynor surprised his brother officers by joining them apparently entirely freed from the gloom that had rested upon his spirits for the past few days. His manner was even more free and cheerful than they had ever before known it.

The conversation was upon the intelligence, brought into camp on the preceding evening, by two deserters, that the whole patriot army, commanded by Greene, was rapidly advancing. This intelligence was generally discredited, and

many were the jokes and expressions of contempt bandied among the officers at the expense of the rebels; when the boom of a distant cannon broke upon their startled ears.

"There, gentlemen," said Raynor, "is an answer to all your doubts. That messenger you can scarcely discredit."

All was now activity and bustle in the English camp, as the lines were hastily formed to repel the advancing foe.

It is not my intention to attempt to describe the memorable battle of Eutaw Springs, for it has been too often and too well described to need repetition here.

Upon this day Major Raynor appeared in his element. Cool, calm and intrepid, his orders were given to his men in brief, clear tones, amid the roar of artillery and the crash of musketry, inspiring his followers with some of his own dauntless courage.

He knew that Marion commanded the first line of the enemy, and he attempted to gain for himself a position in the British line that would bring him opposite to the rebel chieftain. In this he was successful, and, during a charge, he beheld the well-remembered form of the partisan at a little distance from him. Fast and furious his blows fell upon intervening forms, as he spurred his charger madly onward. He had nearly attained his object when a shot struck him, and he fell almost at the feet of Marion's horse.

Ernest D'Arcourt, who rode by his leader's side, sprung to the ground and dragged the wounded man behind the American line.

A look of recognition for a moment came into the face of the dying man, as he saw who supported him. Then his eyes seemed fixed upon some object above him, and he feebly gasped:

"Edith—forgive—"

A tremor passed over his frame, and the soul of the scheming man, but gallant soldier, had gone to its last account.

That night, Ernest had him buried near where he had fallen. Thus his last wish was granted, his last object attained—a soldier's death and a nameless grave.

Years passed. The Revolution was at an end. A beneficent Providence assisted the efforts of the patriots in their

grand struggle for liberty, and the haughty invader had been driven from our shores. The sword had been beaten into the plow-share, former battle-fields were covered with waving grain, and peace, plenty and national prosperity crowned the land.

Another stately mansion had arisen on the site of the former, destroyed by the revengeful hand of Gregory Marland. Time had done its usual work upon the D'Arcourt family. Assembled in the drawing-room, one stately figure was missed from the group. Henry D'Arcourt closed his life of suffering soon after the termination of the war. He never mentioned his eldest son from the time Ernest informed him of the manner of his death; but the stern, gloomy brow told the tale of bitter internal anguish.

A chubby little cherub had taken the place of his grandfather, in the family circle, and he, too, answered to the name of Henry.

Standing at the open window, gazing upon the lawn, was the tall, soldier-like figure of Ernest D'Arcourt. One arm was thrown lovingly about the form of his beautiful wife, when an ungainly-looking man passed the window; but Ernest stopped him, saying:

"Ephraim, our old leader, General Marion, is coming on a visit to us, next week."

"Yeou don't say, kurnel?" replied Ephraim. "Wal, neow I'll be right glad to see him again!" and he passed on.

"God bless the noble heart in that uncouth form," said Ernest, looking tenderly upon his wife. "I never see him, Helen, without remembering the deep debt of gratitude I owe him, for his gallant rescue of the being I love best in the world."

THE END.